

CULTIVATING ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR THROUGH PARTICIPATORY CULTURE OF BURNING MAN

Master's Thesis

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Abstract: In today's interconnected world, the rate of technological progress is like something we have never seen before. For many this is a great opportunity to become an entrepreneur out of choice, while for others it means losing their old job and are possibly becoming entrepreneurs out of necessity. As a result of this, entrepreneurship education is on increasing demand, but institutions that provide entrepreneurship education cannot necessarily meet the demand. This thesis focuses on alternative sources of entrepreneurship education in unconventional environments.

The study observes the theory of entrepreneurial learning in the context of Burning Man event and local communities that are affiliated to the event and how people who collaborate within these communities develop entrepreneurial skills. Theory of entrepreneurial learning is based on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning. Experiential learning happens when past experiences are turned to knowledge that can be used in the future. Entrepreneurial learning happens when knowledge gained through experiences is directed to new enterprise (Gibb, 1997).

Once a year Black Rock Desert in Nevada, USA becomes Black Rock City where Burning Man event takes place. 75 000 event participants create a temporary city that is dedicated to creativity, self-expression and communal effort. For the duration of one week, the citizens of Black Rock City fill the desert with awe-inspiring art installations and other activities. The event and its culture have also been said to be the cultural backbone of Silicon Valley. Many Silicon Valley companies have their roots in the event, such as Google and Solar City. The event has also expanded itself to a global movement of creative communities to dozens of countries.

The research data consists of cases of two multi-disciplinary art projects that were delivered to Burning Man event in the years 2015 and 2016 and of nine interviews of entrepreneurs who are also active in the Burning Man community to know if being involved with the community has had an impact on their business and how? The data collection was made through action research and semi-structured interviews that were conducted in 2016. The study includes the narratives of both projects and interviews. Then thematic analysis was used.

This thesis introduces the theories of experiential and entrepreneurial learning. Then the theoretical background is used reflect findings of this particular study that aims to discover: 1) Does active engaging in Burning Man events and culture influence the development of entrepreneurial behavior? and 2) How could Burning Man be utilized in entrepreneurship education and what are the key takeaways from the experience that are seen beneficial? The findings of this study suggest that experiential and entrepreneurial occurs when engaging in activities related To Burning Man. In addition, the findings suggest that entrepreneurship education could be organized around these activities and some of the things learned this way are difficult to replicate in other environments.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial learning, Burning Man, Experiential Learning, Teamwork, Entrepreneurship education, Entrepreneurship

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1 Introduction

In today's interconnected world, the rate of technological progress is like something we have never seen before (Financial Times 14.2.2016). For many this is a great opportunity to become an entrepreneur out of choice, while for others it means losing their old job and are possibly becoming entrepreneurs out of necessity. Entrepreneurs are generally seen as a very important people in our society, because they create employment by hiring people for their projects and companies. They are also an important force that drives change in society (Acs, 2006). As a result of this, entrepreneurship has become ever more popular research topic among academics.

An entrepreneur is often times defined as a person who engages in new venture creation and development (Acs, 2006; Cooper, 2003). Accordingly, entrepreneurship education is usually directed towards these types of activities, such as universities' entrepreneurship programs, business incubators and accelerators, entrepreneurship clubs and societies, at workplaces and especially working or interning in a startup (Pittaway et al. 2010). However, in the behavioral sense, the definition of entrepreneur can be different. As a person, entrepreneur can be referred as: *"someone who specializes in making judgmental decisions about the coordination of scarce resources"* (Casson, 2003). This definition can be extended to a variety of activities, not just new venture formation and therefore be learned in a number of different types of environments, even seemingly unconventional ones.

Furthermore, many claim that entrepreneurship cannot be taught, but it can only be learned through action and experience (Henry et al. 2005). This type of learning is referred often as Entrepreneurial learning (Politis 2005) that is based on the theory of experiential learning (Reuber, Dyke & Fischer 1990). Experiential learning is referred to a process where knowledge is accumulated through the transformation from experienced events (Kolb et al. 2002). Scholars have traditionally observed these events in entrepreneurial, entrepreneurship

education or other context that intentionally aims to improve entrepreneurship such as entrepreneurship clubs (Pittaway et al., 2011; 2015). This study argues that there are other communities where similar learning events may happen that can be further translated into establishing or running a venture.

In the next section of the study, one particularly interesting context of Burning Man is introduced that has been said to be behind the success of many Silicon Valley technology companies such as Google (Turner, 2009).

1.1 Entrepreneurial learning in the context of Burning Man

Many subcultures outside the traditional “entrepreneurship scene” foster entrepreneurial skills and behavior. What is typical for these subcultures is that they all aim to create something new and work in communities that include a lot of passion-based activities. This sort of behavior is typical and crucial in hacker/maker culture, open-source software communities, and electronic music culture (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010; Mōri, 2009). These communities are structured in a do-ocratic manner that means that the level of entry for a project is low and those who make things happen are the ones who decide how they are being made (Communitywiki.org). A great majority of these cultures can be found at the event called Burning Man that is therefore used as the context of this study.

This study argues that entrepreneurship educators can get new ideas to develop their teaching methods if they understand how the members of Burning Man culture engage in their communal activities, what do they learn while being engaging in these activities and how lessons learned from those experiences can influence entrepreneurial behavior

The next chapter introduces the structure of the thesis, after which the theoretical background is presented.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

This study consists of six chapters. In the Introduction chapter, the background and context of the study have discussed and the research questions introduced. The second chapter of literature review introduces the background of entrepreneurial learning theory. Third chapter presents qualitative research methods as action research and interviews together with narrative analysis. The chapter also provides more thorough representation of the research context. Fourth chapter introduces the two cases that the author participated and studied. Furthermore, nine narratives are presented to understand how various entrepreneurs and their businesses have been impacted by Burning Man culture. The fifth chapter discusses about the research findings and the final chapter concludes this study and presents implications for further research.

2 Theoretical Background of the study

This chapter introduces the theory of entrepreneurial learning that describes the various learning events how entrepreneurs learn. The theory of entrepreneurial learning is based on the theory of experiential learning, but it is focused on developing entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurial learning is said to happen when the action following after experiential learning is guided towards entrepreneurial activity (Gibb, 1997). Because this study researches how the experiences gained through Burner events and culture are translated to entrepreneurial activity. This provides better reasoning to use entrepreneurial learning.

2.1 Entrepreneurial learning

Every entrepreneur is different; they work in different industries, in different geographical locations, they have different set of values, they have different types of entrepreneurial traits and they perceive the world differently than others, especially non-entrepreneurs (Politis, 2005; Gartner, 1989). However, studies show that entrepreneurs' way to learn is quite similar. By understanding this way of learning, it is possible to develop circumstances providing experiences that foster entrepreneurship. Therefore this study seeks to find alternative ways to create such circumstances.

The next part explains the importance of experiential learning as basis and complimentary theory for entrepreneurial learning.

2.1.1 Experiential learning as base for entrepreneurial learning

It is generally accepted that entrepreneurs learn from past experiences (Politis, 2005), but how do they precisely learn from these experiences has traditionally been up to debate (Reuber & Fischer, 1999; Starr, Bygrave & Tercanli, 1993; cited in Politis, 2005). Gibb (1997) points out that entrepreneurs learn by doing

and experimenting, from mistakes and failures, by problem solving and opportunity taking, through feedback and reflection and they learn from their peers. Similarly, Cope and Watts (2000) and Smilor (1997) state that learning by doing is the most popular way among entrepreneurs, while Rae and Carswell, (2000) point out that action-orientation is a key entrepreneurial trait, and that learning through experience is how entrepreneurs learn way to learn. It can then be noted that even though there are many perceptions of how this learning precisely happens, experience plays an important role in the development of how entrepreneurs learn. The roots of studying this are found Kolb's (1984) theory on experiential learning:

The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience. (Kolb 1984)

Kolb's (1984) original theory introduces a learning cycle where the learner goes through four learning phases: *Experiencing, Reflecting, Thinking and Acting* that is a recursive process and responds to the learning situation. According to this theory the learner goes through a cycle of these different learning phases in a recurring manner to generate more knowledge. Later research on experiential learning has then added more perspectives to the theory.

Experiential learning is seen to include accumulation of new knowledge and/or understanding linked to collective experiences (Baker, Jensen, and Kolb 2005 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015) and is oftentimes related to project-based activities that are then reflected upon (Daudelin 1996; Defillippi 2001 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015) and they engage participants in practical work assignments Burgoyne and Hodgson 1983; Davies and Easterby-Smith 1984 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). A typical feature in experiential learning is that the opportunities to learn from mistakes are created for the individuals thus providing a chance for personal growth through new experiences (McLaughlin and Thorpe 1993; Mumford 1994 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). The general consensus among

researchers is that these experiences have to be social and include social learning where others are engaged in the process (Lervik, Fahy, and Easterby-Smith 2010; McLaughlin and Thorpe 1993 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). It has been considered that experiential learning provides a deeper and more effective form of learning for the learners (Biggs 1993; Entwistle and Ramsden 1983 cited in Pittaway et al 2015) and that many educators encourage in experiential learning, such as entrepreneurship educators (Gibb, 2002 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). However, Pittaway et al. (2015) argue that experiential learning is oftentimes used inappropriately and insufficiently in entrepreneurship literature to justify studies where learning any learning through 'experience' is explored (Brah and Hoy 1989), this is due to the overuse and loose definition of the term 'experiential learning' that therefore cannot be uncritically accepted (Holman 2000; Hudson 1983 cited in Pittaway et al, 2015).

Many lessons learned at Burning Man can be explored through 'experiential learning', but researching Burning Man in entrepreneurial context gives a strong reason to prefer 'entrepreneurial learning' to 'experiential learning'.

The next section provides further distinction on entrepreneurial learning as a continuation for experiential learning and how experiential learning compliments entrepreneurial learning.

2.1.2 Entrepreneurial learning as experiential learning directed to new enterprise

In general, the study of entrepreneurial learning refers to the process through which an entrepreneur learns from the past experiences and transforms that learning into knowledge to be used in the future entrepreneurial activities. As mentioned above, the theory is based on the theory of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), but it is usually based on the experience usually related to prior startup or work experience (Politis 2005; Reuber, Dyke & Fischer 1990). To prevent confusing entrepreneurial learning to experiential learning, it is good to clarify that entrepreneurial learning happens when the experiential learning and

the action following is directed to new enterprise (Gibb, 1997). Pittaway et al. (2011; 2015) have conducted studies on how student clubs and participating in extracurricular activities influence entrepreneurial learning that support the claim that by partaking in various projects and activities, one can develop to think more entrepreneurially. Entrepreneurial learning takes place when one learns as he/she goes towards his/her goal creating a new venture (Gartner, 1988; Gelderen et al., 2007). The learning can be described as multi-dimensional process that includes taking action and learning from mistakes and successes happening in the process that have an impact on perceptions on self, others and the surrounding environment (Pittaway et al. 2010). To develop entrepreneurship education, these principles have to be understood.

Based on prior research, Pittaway and Cope (2007) have identified that to simulate entrepreneurial activities and provide entrepreneurial learning experiences in effective entrepreneurship education, the following elements have present:

- *Elements of uncertainty and ambiguity*
- *Forcing the learners to step outside the normal education processes*
- *Increasing the emotional exposure by introducing entirely unfamiliar activities or projects*
- *Using tutorial and course design to carefully manage the emotional exposure*
- *Linking the actual project performance to the student academic performance*
- *Using project-based, hands-on approaches*
- *Ensuring that reflection is built into the course design*
- *Creating regular milestones and/or objectives that are exceptionally challenging*
- *Using tutors or mentors to constantly challenge thinking and creating social learning opportunities*
- *Applying established knowledge to new problems*

These elements have been drawn out of the broader discourse of entrepreneurial learning that describe the factors that influence entrepreneurial

learning. As it has been stated, the key issue for entrepreneurial learning is previous experience that is gained through various different 'critical learning events' (Cope, 2001; Deakins and Freel, 1998; Rae and Carswell, 2000) or 'discontinuous learning events' (Cope 2003) that include 'transformational opportunities and challenges' (Appelbaum and Goransson, 1997) Based on prior research, Pittaway et al. (2007; 2009; 2011; 2015) mention the events and factors that cause entrepreneurs to learn as 'Learning from opportunity, action and adaptation', 'learning from past experience and reflection', 'dealing with ambiguity, emotional pressure and failure', 'practicing social skills and engagement' and 'self-efficacy'

The next sections go through these events and factors in detail. The first one, 'Opportunity recognition, taking action, problem solving and adaptation' describes how entrepreneurs spot opportunities and act on them. These actions often require the entrepreneur to solve various problems and/or adapt to the changing environment.

2.1.3 Opportunity recognition, taking action, problem solving and adaptation

'Adaptive learning' and 'learning by doing' have been an integral part of entrepreneurial research for a long time (Jones, Macpherson, and Woollard 2008; Watts, Cope, and Hulme 1998 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). According to recent research, the general consensus indicates that entrepreneurs are the kinds of people who take action when they recognize an opportunity and learn through gaining tacit knowledge and combine knowledge gained through different past experiences (Dalley and Hamilton, 2000; Rae, 2000; Rae and Carswell, 2000; Jones, 2009). Those entrepreneurs who learn effectively are people who act and are fluid in their actions as they seek the latest knowledge and adjust their behavior on the go (Gartner, 1988). This happens in multiple ways: when engaging in various actions, practical experience gained when engaging in these actions and the learning accumulated over time through these actions (Reuber and Fischer 1999; Smilor 1997). By being able to learn this way, the entrepreneur is able to adapt to the changing circumstances,

change their own behavior and business strategies in a changing environment (Cope and Watts, 2000; Deakins and Freel, 1998). Pittaway and Thorpe (2012) summarize that the experience accumulation as they learn as they do allows them to adjust and navigate in the changing environment. How to approach these factors is a distinguishing feature for entrepreneurs.

The next section describes how entrepreneurs accumulate knowledge through reflecting on past experience.

2.1.4 Learning from past experience and reflection

It has been said that experience becomes learning through reflection (Preskill, 1996) and this makes an experience meaningful (Jarvis 1987 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). Reflective observation has often been overlooked in in entrepreneurial learning literature while the focus has been on the experience itself, but where reflection would had been needed to transform the experience into knowledge that the entrepreneur could use in the future (Cope 2003; Gibb 1997; Rae and Carswell 2000 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015) Alongside the accumulation of tacit knowledge through incremental learning while engaging in real life situations where entrepreneurial experience is gained and create '*transformative learning*' that can occur while dealing with setbacks it is also essential to take reflective learning into consideration (Taylor and Thorpe, 2004 cited in Pittaway et al. 2010). By gaining better understanding of past experiences through reflection, an entrepreneur can better prepare oneself to future situations.

It is generally known that learning is usually more effective while those who engage in the experience practice active reflection what did they come across (Kolb, 1984; Revans, 1982; DeFillipi, 2001 cited in Pittaway et al. 2010) and the entrepreneurs have been considered more capable as entrepreneurs and as learners who engage in reflection (Cope 2003; Rae and Carswell 2000; Taylor and Thorpe 2004 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). It is good to note that there is a

difference between reflecting on 'daily activities' and 'critical situations' that may lead to a complete change in perception and lead to 'higher-level' learning outcomes (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Mezirow 1991 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). Cope (2005) mentions that there are four types of reflection: 'reflection on self' (Minniti and Bygrave, 2001), 'reflection on interaction with others', 'reflection on interaction with others and reflection on past events' (Daudelin, 1996 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015), and how these experiences should be taken in consideration for future events (Gibb 1997; Senge 1990 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). When an entrepreneur understands all these relationships better, he or she is able to build a complete picture of him or herself in relation to others and upcoming events.

The next section describes the importance of dealing with ambiguity, emotional pressure and failure that are essential to entrepreneurship.

2.1.5 Dealing with ambiguity, emotional pressure and failure

Entrepreneurial activities have normally many risks involved (Gartner, 1988; Smilor, 1997) and dealing with the ambiguity that is related to these risks is often times said to be the definition of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship (Pittaway, 2005; Kirzner, 1980). Not knowing exactly what to expect and being comfortable with this is the opening factor for behaving entrepreneurially (Pittaway and Cope, 2007a). The increased sense of ambiguity is present especially in the early stages of the venture formation and during episodes when the venture is not doing that well (Cope, 2003). When the entrepreneur is unable to know what is happening next and taking a sometimes a huge financial risk, may lead to emotional pressure (Cope, 2003). Emotional pressure is often referred as 'emotional roller coaster' where the entrepreneur's emotional and mental well-being is affected much more by the undertaking than in different types of work (Pittaway and Cope, 2007b). It has been noted in earlier research that this experience is the most difficult one to simulate (Pittaway and Cope, 2007b) and still should be understood very well in entrepreneurship education

(Gibb and Hannon, 2007) as if this is experience is insufficiently provided, the effectiveness of the education can be questioned.

Failures and learning from them is essential topic in entrepreneurship studies and studies on entrepreneurial learning. These specific learning events and episodes that have been critical for the growth of the entrepreneur or the company are viewed as being able to manage with great disappointments and coping with sudden events of critical learning (Deakins and Freel, 1998; Reuber and Fisher, 1999; Cope and Watts, 2000; Cope, 2003) This means that entrepreneurs experience transformative and/or accelerated experience of learning while experiencing certain crises and/or difficult events regardless if these events have negative or positive outcomes (Pittaway et al. 2010). To provide proper entrepreneurship education, the possibilities to experience failure should be provided.

The next section describes the importance of social interaction as entrepreneurs in this context rarely work completely by themselves.

2.1.6 Practicing social skills and engagement

Pittaway et al. (2015) point out that the importance social aspect of entrepreneurial learning has increased recently (Harrison and Leitch, 2008; Leitch and Harrison 2005; Pittaway and Thorpe 2012 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). As Gibb (1997) already highlighted, entrepreneurial activities are rarely one-man-show, but rather include a lot of collaborative collective and social activities. The process of co-participation is essential in entrepreneurial learning (Hines and Thorpe, 1995; Taylor and Thorpe, 2004). Learning in the entrepreneurial context is inseparable process derived from social practice where social relationships have an important role in decision-making and learning processes in relation to business (Karatas-Özkan, 2011 cited in Pittaway et al 2015). These social relationships may also be the reason behind conflicts that create transformative learning for entrepreneurs (Cope 2005;

Jones, Macpherson, and Thorpe 2010 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). An example of the social engagement could be when an entrepreneur tests his or her ideas with friends and business partners or discussing decisions with employees to receive feedback before making the decision (Hamilton, 2004). Other people's experiences are also valuable, as entrepreneurs often consult mentors to learn from their experience to avoid the same mistakes their mentors had made (Gibb 1997). This shows that entrepreneurial learning should be seen as a social phenomenon by which entrepreneurs are seen as practitioners within their communities (Rae, 2002; Hamilton, 2004; Cope, 2005). The importance of social engagement should never be underestimated and by knowingly developing social skills, an entrepreneur can make a big difference whether he or she can become more successful.

The next part explains self-efficacy as one of the key features that drives an entrepreneur to push harder to achieve his or her goals.

2.1.7 Self-efficacy

Bandura (1977) introduced the theory of self-efficacy that describes the person's ability to succeed in different situations. In entrepreneurial research, self-efficacy is often associated with confidence or ability to start a venture or a project, and succeeding in that (Koh, 1996). Previous research on self-efficacy has shown improvement in the entrepreneurial skills and traits when people have received entrepreneurship education for instance after participating activities in entrepreneurship clubs and gained confidence to start their own business (Pittaway et al. 2015). It is regarded as an important part of entrepreneurial learning and capability (Bird 1988; 1992). Self-efficacy is generally seen that when entrepreneurs accumulate experience, especially if they succeed or have learned from failure, their general confidence-level will increase alongside their tendency to take risks (Bird, 1992). Experience, knowledge of the activity and interacting with a community of practice can increase ones belief on his/her capabilities and perception of self and enhance

the intentions to act entrepreneurially (Hansemark, 1998; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003). These concepts are important when studying entrepreneurial learning and this study explores if the participants engaged in Burning Man activities – and succeeded in them – have experienced increased intent to start their own projects or businesses.

The next chapter introduces the qualitative research methods that are used to collect and analyze the data of this study.

3 Research Methodology

This chapter introduces the research methods and process used in this study. The first parts introduces qualitative research methods used in this study such as narrative research as a basis for the research method. The narratives for this research are then collected action research and semi structured interviews. After explaining the data collection method, thematic analysis and inductive reasoning are explained. At the end of the chapter, a thorough description of the context of this study is provided.

3.1 Qualitative research methods

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) explain qualitative research being a constantly transforming process without unified definition that all researchers agree upon. Gronhaug & Ghauri (2005) provide a description of qualitative research as best suitable process to describe and increase our knowledge of events that are not well known. Due to the unusual context of Burning Man used entrepreneurship study there is not much information available on the topic. Therefore it makes sense to use qualitative approach.

Qualitative research has its other benefits too. Miles & Huberman (1994) mention qualitative research being particularly useful then studying daily events

in their natural context because of the general richness of qualitative data. Qualitative research also seeks to answer questions “how” and “why, and that is the reason it can be suitable for this study seeking to find answers to the questions:

1) Does active engaging in Burning Man events and culture influence the development of entrepreneurial behavior?

2) How could Burning Man be utilized in entrepreneurship education and what are the key takeaways from the experience that are seen beneficial?

Next the method of narrative research is described. The chapter explains the interpretation of the research data.

3.2 Narrative research

Narrative research can be described as an umbrella term for multiple types of research that use storytelling to deliver the message (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015,). Narrative stories are much more richer and thicker making them more memorable and compelling than non-narrative texts (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015).

Narrative paradigm and theory have their roots in philosophy, literary and language and communication studies (Bal, 2009). Narrative methodologies and methods have then been further developed by social scientists. These include Riessman (1993), Clandinin & Connely (2000) and Elliott 2005, which have written about the value of spoken and written stories in how we construct and understand reality (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015).

Social scientists are interested in stories that analyze individuals, groups, organizations and cultures, where narrative inquiry is used as methodological approach to research all kinds of empirical data (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015).

It has been said that in business research, narrative research has at least four different forms, that can be: ethnographies, career stories and case stories (De Rond, 2008), Stories told by people of certain group, such as business educators, consumers, consultants or employees (Gabriel, 2000), story making by conceptualizing different aspects of life (Starkey and Crane, 2003) or reflection as form of literary critique (e.g. analyzing the plot of a certain theory) (Hagan and Cohen, 2014).

Boje (2001), identifies four trends in storytelling in organizational research:

1. Stories are used to describe and measure a certain phenomenon, such as culture within and organization or how strategic decisions are being made.
2. Stories in their performance context with questions like 'the role of storytelling within an organization.
3. Stories can be practical tools (e.g. in action research project) to improve organizational performance.
4. Using stories to bring out marginalized and suppressed people to be heard to counter the more conventional narratives

(Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015)

Narrative research holds a lot of methodological diversity within, and it can be difficult for an untrained researcher to manage properly (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015). The difference between realist, constructionist, postmodern and post-structural approach to narrative research is significant (Bold, 2011; cited in Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015).

Narrative research is not meant to produce one universal truth, but to offer one point of view. Facts are always interpreted in narrative research; that is why it is always possible to tell the same story in many ways. This is the reason why positivist or postpositivist research criteria cannot be used. (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015)

The next part describes how this study uses action research as source of narrative to provide understanding to the two projects that were created for Burning Man in 2015 and 2016.

3.3 Action research as source of narrative

Action research is an efficient way to learn about existing practices and how new practices are developed, and allow the focus organization to reflect their situation and challenges (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Action research is an appropriate research method when the researcher is in close collaboration with the object being researched, and solving the object's practical problem(s) as part of the research process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Action research was seen as suitable method in this study as the author was the initiator of both of the projects described here and therefore was in close contact with the processes.

Action research has its roots in anthropology where it is common to research a particular community in a way that the researcher becomes an active member of the community and helps the community to overcome various challenges they might face (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Rather than regarded purely as a research method, it is good to perceive action research as an approach to certain kind of research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). In this case it involved leading and observing the activities related to taking two different projects to Burning Man.

Real life cases and problems are the driving force of action research. It starts always from a practical point where there is a need to change something. In this way it combines theory with practice (Sein et al., 2011). It engages the researcher with the researched community in working together in practical action, data acquisition, data analysis, and in transforming new knowledge through social interaction. Action research often uses multiple different

methodologies to create interactive research design, and by active participation and collaboration it empowers the people engaged in the researched activities through participation, providing knowledge and raising awareness (Altrichter et al., 2002; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). When it comes to action research, it is common that the researcher himself initiates the project instead of the organization (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

This was also the case in this research where the author initiated the “Aalto on Fire” and “Koulu on Fire” projects, and worked as the project manager, and witnessed all the phases of the project of that were documented on personal notes, project working platform (Slack, Facebook and Google docs). The intention of “Aalto on Fire” was to develop a replicable model that universities around the world could copy in their curriculum if they wish to do so and organize project courses to deliver art to Burning Man, whereas “Koulu on Fire” was more of a result of chain of events. The data gathered from these projects was then converted into two narratives that were later analyzed using thematic method that is explained later after the interviews in the next section.

In the next part, semi-structured interviews are presented. This was the secondary data collection method to provide a broader understanding of Burning Man and entrepreneurship.

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews as source of narrative

As the context and the experience of Burning Man are so multi-dimensional and personal for each participant, describing these experiences can best be done by interviews.

Interviews are a good data collection method as it can capture the meaning that people give to the phenomenon researched (Koskinen, et al., 2005, p. 106). However, one should note that interviews do not guarantee full reliability, as one cannot be certain if the interviewed is providing the complete and honest picture

(Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 10). Literature review on entrepreneurial learning was used as the source of the questions [appendix 1.] that were left open ended. The author was then able to ask more defining questions if necessary. In total, 9 Burners who are also entrepreneurs were interviewed in this study to provide a broad overall understanding of the research topic while each individual interview provided deep insights from each individual Burner entrepreneur. Eriksson & Kovalainen (2015) emphasize that it is precisely the deep understanding of the topic that makes interviews a useful tool in qualitative research.

The interviewees for this research were found at the Burning Man Global Leadership Conference 2016 in San Francisco as well as from Burning Man mailing lists. By doing this, a broad representation of entrepreneurs from different countries was obtained. After recording the 9 interviews, they were transcribed into a narrative that was then analyzed using thematic analysis method.

The next part describes the process of data analysis.

3.3.2 Thematic analysis plan

After conducting the interviews and transcribing them, and piecing together a story from the action research cases, the raw texts are then transformed into separate stories that are then analyzed individually. From each case, the themes related to entrepreneurial learning were identified and categorized to see if the events and implications fit the theory. These implications to theory were then gathered to tables [appendix 1. & 2.] after which, it was possible to cross-reference the interpretations from both sources of data and find similarities. It is important that the interpretation does not include hypotheses or assumptions exceeding the evidence of each individual interview. (Thompson et al. 1989)

By doing so, I am able to find if there is an implication whether it is Burning Man and its culture that catalyzes one taking “the leap of faith” to become an entrepreneur and/or have an impact on their way to run business.

The next section provides a proper description to the research context that is Burning Man event and the culture that has stemmed out of the event and now become a global phenomenon.

3.4 **Burning Man as context of the study**

Larry Harvey, the founder of Burning Man, has said that whole point of Burning Man is to create a world where you want to live in. *“Our everyday life is defined by a set of rules, norms and roles. Most of us go to a job that is appointed to us and we live in areas that we cannot have influenced on”*. At Burning Man, you get to try new things you could not have imagined doing before (Hirshberg, 2014; Time Magazine, 2009).



Picture 1© Scott London

Burning Man event takes place annually in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert. Approximately 75 000 people gather on an ancient lakebed - hostile to any

living organism to live in - to build Black Rock City where the event takes place. This differs from most of the festivals all over the world where usually the producers and attendees are separated from one another. At Burning Man, every participant is seen to be part of the event production (Burningman.org). This makes a huge difference to the experience.

For years, scholars have shown interest towards the event and its culture (Burning Man Philosophical Center), and how it has impacted the culture of Silicon Valley (TechCrunch, 2014; Entrepreneur). It is well known that some of its community members were the early pioneers of the Internet (Burning Man Innovate; VentureBeat). A good example of this is how Turner (2009) explained the event's influence on Google as a company and to many of its products, and how some other companies have sent their executives to the event for creative training.

Since its early days, Burning Man has attracted a diverse group of participants from various subcultures. Wray (1995) noted the vast array of subcultures found at the event ranging from artists, desert survivalists, rocketeers, anarchists and ravers to gun enthusiasts, dancers, anarchists eco-freaks etc., to mention a few. Chen (2011) points out that in the context of Burning Man, it is this sheer diversity of individuals within a dense geographical location will lead to cross-fertilization of ideas that can mediate innovation.

The next section provides further information about the event's peculiarity. Participation is one of the core elements in the event that makes it such a different experience as everyone is expected to engage in multiple participatory activities.

3.5 Participation at Burning Man

The participation shows itself in various forms, the most obvious ones being the participants accommodate themselves organizing into various 'theme camps' where they provide program for the event participants (organizing into camps to

share resources is also essential to survive in the harsh environment), performance groups, art projects etc. (Hirschberg, 2014). This takes a lot of planning in beforehand and is very different from any other festival where people just bring their own tents and camp where they find space.

Participation can be big or small and there are no prerequisites for doing that as everyone is invited to create together. This is the essence what has attracted some of the most successful and creative individuals on Earth (Hirschberg, 2014). Examples of participation can vary spontaneous performances and giving a massage to someone to performing on a big stage.

While the event and its content are self-organized by tens of thousands of people from all over the globe, the direction of the event is determined by The Burning Man Organization (BORG), who curate the content and evaluate it from a philosophical standpoint rather than as democratic leaders. They determine the size of the event, negotiate for the land use, design the layout of the city, organize ticket sales, provide grants for projects and artwork, and educate and communicate to the global community (Hirschberg, 2014). Otherwise BORG aims to provide as much freedom for the participants to do what they wish as long as they follow the mutual code of conduct called the 10 principles.

Burning Man event happens annually in the end of August and ends on the Labor Day weekend. After one week of celebration and personal discovery, the participants leave the event without a trace. This means that every participant makes sure that nothing is left behind, not a tiniest nutshell or a cigarette butt. Every participant understands that everything they bring with him or her to the event, they also have to take it away. Though many who participate in the event for the first time and are aware of this fact, it may come as a surprise for many that there are no trash bins provided by the event organizers, but the participants really have to take care of their own trash (Hirschberg, 2014;

Burning Man Moop Map). This already creates a sort of mind shift as everyone is collectively responsible that nothing is left behind.

The next part describes about another defining element in the event called self-reliance, which means that everyone should be able to take care of him or herself and others in the harsh environment.

Self-reliance

Another distinctive feature in the event is the expectation of every participant being self-reliant. Everyone is expected to part in creating the city and taking it down. There is no central power grid; nobody is providing lighting or any other service or commodity that is provided in our normal lives. At the event, the organizers provide only the bare minimum of services only the space, portable toilets and emergency services. This forces the participants to really figure out how they organize themselves, share resources and how to work within a greater system (Hirschberg, 2014; Burning Man 10 Principles). This also makes one much more aware about their relationship to the surrounding environment

Burning Man is famous for it's art and culture. The event has accidentally created its own genre of art that is large-scale interactive art such as large structures where one can climb on.

3.6 Burning Man's art and culture

The art at Burning Man is not what we are used to expect from art. At the event, the arts are there to bring a community together. They are the key medium for Burner communities to self-organize around projects, and are the principal way how Burning Man spreads its culture when anyone is allowed to create, express themselves and take action. The works of art are a way to tell grand-scale immersive stories and to get 75 000 people to discuss major social themes collectively. This is the way that Burning Man art helps the participants to

reframe their perception of the world. (Hirshberg, 2014) Many people come back from the event after going through a transformative experience where some have set all of their values in a new order

The culture of Burning Man has developed in the hostile environment of Black Rock Desert where the temperature may rise up to 40°C and go down close to 0°C. It takes a great deal of determination to get things done there. In order to build a structure – or art – in such a remote location, one must deal with lots of logistical planning to get the raw materials, tools and other equipment on site. Then it takes a lot from the construction teams to deal with the scorching heat during daytime, almost subzero temperatures during night, not to mention the frequent dust storms (Hirshberg, 2014). Managing a successful project in these conditions is likely to give a lot of confidence to take on future projects.

The next part will present Burning Man as a sort of laboratory for the future where many technologies and ideas are being tested for dissemination into the wider world.

3.7 Burning Man - A laboratory for the future?

Black Rock City where Burning Man event takes place has been described as a prototype maker city. It is a city where its residents are the urban planners, infrastructure builders and artist. By the course of its 30 years of existence the event has developed a way to balance between centrally run structure and curation, and horizontal, extremely autonomous community that creates the city as it desires. Everyone has the permission to be an artist, not only those who have been permitted by an authority – this is a huge difference when compared to other large art festivals around the world. It is possible because everyone within the community share the same principles (Hirshberg, 2014).

The event and the culture foster great deal of responsibility and agency that allow the participants to try new things, fail safely and interact with one another. Everything is taken away at the end of the event and the next year everything is

different again. This gives the participants the permission to prototype and experiment a multitude of things beginning their own identity. These ideas have oftentimes been exported outside the event and have served as a base for number of urban and civic initiatives, public art installations and actual ventures (Hirshberg, 2014; Turner, 2009; Entrepreneur, 2015).

Over the years other Burn events have been emerging all over the world. Those events share the same principles, but are independently organized by local Burner communities.

3.8 Global Burning Man Community

Burning Man event grew from an underground event of few to a global phenomenon and community. The global Burning Man community consists of 127 local communities, of which 45 are located in 35 countries outside the United States (Burning Man Regionals). Burning Man Organization organizes two annual conferences for representatives from these communities to exchange information on event management, fundraising, legal issues and know-how. These conferences are called the Global Leadership Conference (GLC) and The European Leadership Summit (ELS) (Hirschberg, 2014).



Picture 1 © Burning Man Regionals

There are also 60+ regional 'Burn' events organized all over the world by local Burner communities. These events follow the same principles as Burning Man, but they can take place in the most imaginative places such as the Scottish Highlands, the Coast of Arctic Sea in Norway or up in the Alps (Burning Man Regionals).

The next part will introduce the 10 principles of Burning Man that are the core of the Burner culture. Through these, Burning Man has enabled to scale it self to a global movement.

3.9 The 10 Principles of Burning Man

From an outsider's perspective, the event may seem as chaotic, spontaneous occurrence. The truth is however, that the event functions based on its core principles that are to a large extent, mutually agreed and enforced by the participant-peers. This allows the minimum amount of government and maximum amount of personal freedom within the event. To make the event functional, the participants have to realize that they are members of a mindful community that then share the responsibility to monitor each other and enforce the mutual set of rules to make it possible the event to continue its existence (Hirshberg, 2014). This might seem off to begin with, but once at the event, they make a lot of sense. They also provide a mutual language for the culture.

The 10 principles of Burning Man emerged in 2004 when communities all over the world had started to organize their own 'Burn' events and needed a mutual foundation to base their events on. These principles had emerged of the elements that were distinctive to the event and had made its continuation in the desert possible. They do not dictate how a person should behave, but provided guidelines to reflect their own behavior (Burning Man 10 Principles). The 10 principles are a very powerful guideline and a conflict resolution tool within the event and the culture.

The 10 principles of Burning Man are described here in their original form as they are intended to convey the message they are intended to.

Radical Inclusion

Anyone may be a part of Burning Man. We welcome and respect the stranger. No prerequisites exist for participation in our community.

Burning Man community accepts anyone to participate in their events and as contributors despite their political views, religious norms, race or sexual orientation.

Gifting

Burning Man is devoted to acts of gift giving. The value of a gift is unconditional. Gifting does not contemplate a return or an exchange for something of equal value.

Burning Man considers any contribution to the event and the wellbeing of its participants as a gift. A gift can be anything - a physical gift, a performance, a piece of art etc. Gifts are given unconditionally without expecting to get anything in return.

Decommodification

In order to preserve the spirit of gifting, our community seeks to create social environments that are unmediated by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising. We stand ready to protect our culture from such exploitation. We resist the substitution of consumption for participatory experience.

There are no commercial vendors or brands present at Burn events. Connecting Burning Man directly to any commercial product or service is highly discouraged.

Radical Self-reliance

Burning Man encourages the individual to discover, exercise and rely on his or her inner resources.

Burning Man event can potentially be fatal and the organizers do not take any responsibility for any injuries or deaths at the event. This means that every participant must take care of themselves and remember to bring shelter, water, food and other necessities to the event.

Radical Self-expression

Radical self-expression arises from the unique gifts of the individual. No one other than the individual or a collaborating group can determine its content. It is offered as a gift to others. In this spirit, the giver should respect the rights and liberties of the recipient.

Anyone can be whoever they wish to be at the event and express themselves in any way as long as it respects the other participants' rights and liberties. Examples of self-expression are dressing up, creating a performance, creating a piece of art etc.

Communal Effort

Our community values creative cooperation and collaboration. We strive to produce, promote and protect social networks, public spaces, works of art, and methods of communication that support such interaction.

Almost everything at Burning Man is an outcome of a community working towards their common goal.

Civic Responsibility

We value civil society. Community members who organize events should assume responsibility for public welfare and endeavor to communicate civic responsibilities to participants. They must also assume responsibility for conducting events in accordance with local, state and federal laws.

All state and federal laws apply at Burning Man.

Leaving No Trace

Our community respects the environment. We are committed to leaving no physical trace of our activities wherever we gather. We clean up after ourselves and endeavor, whenever possible, to leave such places in a better state than when we found them.

Every participant is responsible of their own trash and there are no public trash bins at the event.

Participation

Our community is committed to a radically participatory ethic. We believe that transformative change, whether in the individual or in society, can occur only through the medium of deeply personal participation. We achieve being through doing. Everyone is invited to work. Everyone is invited to play. We make the world real through actions that open the heart.

“There are no spectators, only participants at Burning Man.” Everyone is encouraged to participate in the activities happening at the event. Participation

is what differentiates Burning Man from other events where a line is drawn between producer of the event and a consumer.

Immediacy

Immediate experience is, in many ways, the most important touchstone of value in our culture. We seek to overcome barriers that stand between us and a recognition of our inner selves, the reality of those around us, participation in society, and contact with a natural world exceeding human powers. No idea can substitute for this experience."

Be yourself, be present in the moment.

(Burning Man 10 Principles)

The next chapter introduces the empirical part of the thesis. The empirical part consists of two action research cases of two projects that were taken to the event by the author and a multi-disciplinary team from Finland.

4 Data Analysis and Findings

The narratives of two action research cases and nine thematic interviews are introduced in this chapter. By using thematic analysis, different themes related to entrepreneurial learning are then identified from the data, divided into groups, discussed, and conclusions are then drawn based on the findings. The themes that describe the relation to theory from 'critical learning events' are:

- Opportunity recognition
- Taking action
- Problem solving
- Learning from past experience
- Reflection

- Ambiguity and emotional pressure
- Failure
- Practicing social skills and social engagement (Teamwork, network)
- Self-efficacy

The project cases below demonstrate and provide detailed information about the different phases of delivering a project for Burning Man and what kinds of entrepreneurial lessons learned they can provide. There is a reflection part after each chapter that summarizes the critical learning events from each project phase. These two consecutive projects also provide understanding what the project managers learned from the first one and how that knowledge was later applied to the second project. Later, a table will be provided where the learning events from the events are grouped together and then finally discussed together with the findings from the interviews.

In the interviews section, nine different narratives based on semi-structured interviews are discussed. The interviewees are Burners who are also entrepreneurs themselves from various fields and countries. This provides a broad understanding of the activities involved in the Burning Man communities and how they have impacted the interviewees on a personal level, how they have impacted their businesses directly and how the experiences have impacted them as entrepreneurs. These experiences are then grouped together on a table and later discussed together with the findings from the action research cases.

By comparing these two types of datasets together, more thorough understanding about the influence of the Burning Man culture activities towards entrepreneurship can be provided.

The next part introduces a project called Aalto on Fire that happened in 2015 and despite all setbacks turned out to be a tremendous success.

4.1 Aalto on Fire project

Aalto on Fire was a project that took place in the year 2015 when a group of Aalto University students designed and delivered an interactive art installation to Burning Man 2015.



Picture 3 © Anttu Koistinen

The project was continuum to other similar projects when Aalto University students across all of the six schools have organized a trip to a foreign continent to learn from its culture and business opportunities. The first one of these was Aalto on Tracks in 2010, where a group of Aalto students hired an entire train across Siberia to take 100 students, faculty and affiliates to the Shanghai World Expo in China. The trip was entirely organized by a group of students who teamed up to take care of all the fundraising, marketing and operations (Aalto on Tracks).

Aalto on Tracks was followed by Aalto on Waves in 2011 where Aalto students and faculty set sails towards Brazil (Aalto on Waves) and Aalto in Africa in 2012 where a group of students explored Africa and the possibilities there (Aalto in Africa).

Aalto on Fire was the fourth iteration of the Aalto on X concept that took a very different approach to the whole concept.

4.1.1 Project timeline

The original inception of the idea for Aalto on Fire had come around the time Aalto on Tracks was happening, but it was considered to be impossible at the time and more of a hypothetical dream due to lack of experience, connections and know-how how to pull off such project. The project could be seen to have begun in 2014 when the author (AL) – who had years of background in organizing electronic music events in Finland and working on different types of innovation related courses at Aalto Design Factory – spent time at Stanford University in the San Francisco Bay Area and participated in the Burning Man Global Leadership conference that is an annual meeting for Burning Man community leaders from all over the world.

At the conference the AL met one of the key people in charge (MR) of the event's global network and suggested the idea to bring an interdisciplinary group of university students to the event and have them to design and deliver an interactive art installation to the event. For the design, the student team would use design thinking and other tools used in product and service development – this was the perfect way to combine the background from event production and innovation.

The response was very positive and AL began to work on possible solutions. Most appealing was to come up with a course for credit at Aalto University.

4.1.1.1 **Getting started**

After returning to Finland, AL began to look for possible solutions how to start the project. The first thing to do was to get Aalto University's support and find a team for going forward. For this, the most natural place to seek support was the Aalto Design Factory.

Aalto Design Factory describes itself as a passion-based learning platform. It is a space where many of the multi-disciplinary courses that focus on problem-based learning at Aalto University are held. The space provides 3000 square meters of space for students, researchers and companies to cooperate. It consists of workshops, meeting rooms, exhibition rooms and other places to interact. Its mission is to educate world's best product designers. (Aalto Factories; Aalto Design Factory).

AL went to discuss with the head of Design Factory (KE) whether it would be possible to organize a course around Burning Man. As anyone, KE was a bit suspicious in the beginning, but after being showed evidence that the event is not just a big party in the desert, but something much more profound, KE got interested and said: "Let's see".

In a short while, KE got finally convinced after making a visit to one of the key figures in the Finnish gaming industry who then made KE understand how significant understand how significant role Burning Man has in the Silicon Valley area and his dream would be have something like Burning Man in Finland, but it should be a year-round thing.

Self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, problem solving

By having an idea and then making it into reality is extremely empowering, and it definitely increases anyone's confidence and self-efficacy to move on to more ambitious projects. This was also the case for AL before and after Aalto on Fire. As mentioned above, AL had experience in event production and

innovation projects. Both of these had taught many of the necessary skills and process to take on the project and how to deal with a group of volunteers. They had also provided the understanding about creative and project management processes to follow while working on it.

4.1.1.2 Finding a core team and looking for funding

As A went around talking to people about the idea trying to find interested and capable people to work on the project. One day, when he was conducting an interview for a course project at a seminar in Tampere, he bumped into an entrepreneur acquaintance (MI) of him that he knew had gone to Burning Man before. MI got immediately excited about the idea and told A that he was the key person behind the original Aalto on Tracks.

MI agreed to help in the project as an advisor and help with the fundraising and giving tips on the project management as he had raised over 250 000 euros for the Aalto on Tracks project.

MI then drafted the first grant application and provided consultation how the grant system and foundations work in Finland.

Right about the same time, AC who had been working as a coach at Design Factory for many years, was about to get his contract ended. Without knowing about certain future AC then told his boss, KE, “If I am about to get fired, please let me go out in a blaze of glory”. KE then asked AC if he had heard of Burning Man, to which AC responded that he knows of the event that it is a big party, but nothing else.

KE then told AC that there could be this one project that nobody asked for, there’s no money for doing it and it’s risky as hell, so a perfect project for AC. A couple of days later AL and AC met for the first time.

The initial plan then for Aalto on Fire was then to take around 25 students over to the event with majority of their expenses covered and make a student documentary of the project as in this case, the tickets were extremely difficult to come by and after some point the benefit of increasing the number of participants turns negative.

Community

Getting any project or a business started and finding the right people for the job is always the hardest thing. Luckily AL could directly tap into Aalto Design Factory's community and support to find the right people and other resources to start the project. Without having a skilled and passionate community to support the endeavor, it would not have been possible. It also helped to find credibility for the unusual project that was to be organized in a questionable environment for the majority of people to have a strong institution such as university behind it.

Finding funding was very difficult to begin with, as AL had no prior experience in that. However, through serendipitous encounters – and once again, being part of the Aalto community – he found the right person for the job.

4.1.1.3 Finding inspiration, information and announcing the project

In February 2015, the second Burning Man European Leadership conference was organized in Amsterdam where AL and AC then headed. During the weekend the both learned a lot when people from various different countries shared their experiences and other valuable information about taking projects to Burning Man and what kind of problems and successes they had faced.

After the weekend in Amsterdam, AL and AC hosted two events at Aalto University about Burning Man for which they got two representatives from the Burning Man organization as guests. The first one was an open lecture and discussion event about Burning Man event, the art and the global community.

The event gathered around 200 participants and it was also announced that Aalto on Fire would happen in some shape or form.

The next day there was another event at Startup Sauna, which is a local startup incubator and accelerator at Aalto University. This was the first social gathering in Finland for anyone who is interested in Burning Man, its culture and network.

Social engagement, Ambiguity, Self-Efficacy

It was important to have a venue that could be used to launch the project. Luckily Aalto Design Factory and Startup Sauna were perfect for these activities.

Launching a project with no guarantees of succeeding in front of hundreds of people was also something new. It was a great learning opportunity for everyone involved and it also sealed the commitment for everyone involved that they have to deliver what they had promised – and caused a lot of ambiguity within the project members.

4.1.1.4 Radio silence, finding tickets and pivoting

After the team had announced publicly that they are going to take Aalto University students to Burning Man, the reality hit them. The amount of tickets that had been discussed with the organizers did not happen, also most of the grants that had been applied to cover the travel costs for the students did not happen and the organizing team was busy with their other work.

The project was losing its momentum and people excited about it started to soon forget about the whole thing.

As the spring progressed and no money for the project was in sight, the team began to get desperate. Luckily AL was working on a course project that

included one study trip to anywhere in the world. AL then was able to convince the team to make a study trip to San Francisco and Silicon Valley area at the same time when the Burning Man Global Leadership Conference was taking place.

At the conference AL made many vital connections regarding the project. Most importantly he established a connection with The Reno Generator, a local artist space where a good deal of the Burning Man art pieces are built (The Reno Generator). Other than that, AL was able to have a discussion with MR about the ticket issue and had to convince her that the project will happen, no matter what. Despite convincing, MR kept insisting that the project would be made the next year, where A responded that it is going to happen now or never.

Opportunity recognition, taking action, social engagement

When AL and AC realized everything was not going as planned, they had to think about something new. Fortunately AL then recognized the opportunity that if he could leverage one of the project courses he was working on, he could then travel to San Francisco to make further connections and receive help and consultation for their problems – as at that point the project was in big trouble by not having enough money, tickets and the fact that people were losing interest.

At the same time the concept had to be rethought. AL had a serious discussion over phone with MI that as the money was short and the entire project was about to be shut down as people had lost interest and time was running out.

AL then realized that in order to make the project happen, nobody could be compensated for their travel and then everyone had to pay for the travel costs themselves. This then of course meant that not as wide participation from the Aalto community could be possible as many of the younger students were not

able to afford such trip. All the money was to be directed towards the materials and logistics of the installation.

AL also met MR during the same night to discuss about the tickets for the project. As Burning Man itself refused to nominate tickets for the project. MR then promised that she would nominate all of her personal tickets for the project's use as each Burning Man employee gets a certain quota of tickets that they can then nominate for people to purchase.

Adaptive learning, problem solving

By convincing the team members themselves and the ones who were supporting the project, the team was able to lift itself up again and after receiving proper consultation from MI, who then worked as the project mentor, AL also realized that they would have to adapt to the prevailing situation that there was no money in sight and so it was impossible to guarantee affordable trip for everyone if the project was to be finished. It was also crucial to solve the ticket issue, as without them it would have been impossible to go on.

4.1.1.5 Jumpstarting the project again

After coming back from San Francisco in May 2015, AL and AC started working on the initial plan how to make the project happen. The first thing to do was to put out the "Bat Signal" on Facebook that the project is happening and hosting an event of the process how it is going to work out.

The two organized an event at Aalto Design Factory where the project timeline and terms for participation were presented. The event gathered only a fraction of the participants compared to the event held in February, but that was no surprise.

No false hopes were given to people about a “free trip to Disneyland” and the intention was to make sure that the participants understood that it would take a lot of work and effort to be part of the project.

Adaptive learning, social engagement, ambiguity

When the parameters for the project were readjusted, the team was able to go on with a clearer vision that was more suitable for the prevailing situation. They still had no guarantees of succeeding, but there was no other way than to push further as they organized called out the people still interested in the project and organized the first workshop to come up with the art piece design.

4.1.1.6 The first workshop

The first workshop for the project was held in late May 2015, when there was only 3 months to the event. The workshop gathered around 20 participants from various backgrounds, such as game design, virtual reality, sound design, mechanical engineering, industrial design, contemporary art, business, electrical engineering, law, computer science, cancer research etc.

To begin the workshop, the participants were given the task to draw a giraffe eating out of a tree where on each spot of the giraffe would describe one personal strength of that individual and each leaf on the tree would describe something that they would hope to gain from the project.

Then the entire group was divided into three different sub-groups with as much variety as possible defined by the giraffes. The groups were then given a task to design something that is very Finnish, that has a connection to our roots, the present day and to our future.

At the end of the day, there were three different prototypes made out of cardboard - two concepts of a sauna and one fish head with the Finnish national instrument, Kantele in its mouth that refers to the Finnish national epic Kalevala.

In Kalevala there is a famous poem about men traveling the river of the underworld and there is a great pike guarding the river of the underworld. A seer called Väinämöinen slays the pike and makes the first kantele out of its jawbone. (Parkkinen)

Everyone at the workshop then gathered around the prototype and thought: “that’s it”.

Self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, network, teamwork, ambiguity taking action

It was crucial to understand the methodology of collaborative design. This allowed facilitating a workshop that then brought results.

After the concept for installation was decided, the team was facing more problems as basically all of the most necessary skills were missing within the team. It still didn’t make the team to lose its faith, but all of the members then had to reach out to their extended networks and have their eyes and ears open if those people could then be found somewhere – and they were. It was also an interesting lesson in terms of having such a serendipitous experience and finding the right people when they are needed.

4.1.1.7 Getting forward with the concept and finding the key people

Now that the concept was decided, the actual work to make it began. The team scheduled weekly appointments for meetings at Design Factory to design and build the first prototype.

The team soon identified three major problems. Nobody had any idea how to make the actual Kantele instrument, how to make proper CAD (Computer-aided Design) models of the installation and how to work with wood - basically the three most essential skills to make the project happen.

AC went home a bit worried and started talking about the issues with his wife. It did not take long when she told AC that she knew the most established kantele maker (HK) in Finland and he could be crazy enough to join the project.

AL and AC then called HK the next day without any expectations if he could be interested in joining such project. The response was immediately very positive and HK asked if there would be a ticket for his son (AK) so that he could join the trip. The next day he asked if he could join as well.

The workshops then continued and the team had to work with what they had at that point. Luckily one of the team members had met a soon-to-be architect (JK) at a party and told about the project and the fact that the team needed help. JK then agreed to provide some support for the project as a consultant.

It was also clear that without a carpenter or someone who really knows how to work with wood, making a wooden piece would be extremely difficult. So it then happened that one night when AC was returning some tools to his friend (JP) with the project's videographer (MiR), he started talking about Burning Man and the project. JP then told that Burning Man has been on his list of things to do for many years, but his work and relationship had been on the way to keep him from participating. However, now that his relationship had just ended recently and since then he had been spending a lot of time with crafting a boat and making other woodwork. AC then mentioned about the possibility to join the team and the event if JP would be interested - and he was.

Teamwork, problem solving

When finally all the necessary skills were at hand, planning the design of the piece logistics of its delivery were about project management, but on an extremely short timeline while working with a group that consisted of volunteers who are not motivated by money. At that point, it is extremely crucial to provide every team member a sense of ownership over the project

and allow them to develop so that they keep working and not leave the project – as they could do so any time.

4.1.1.8 **Getting the team to function**

The team kept on meeting every week and many issues regarding the design were constantly discussed and discarded. The basic features of the piece were that it should not be too much bigger than a box truck; it should be made of wood so that it is burnable, it should utilize modern production methods and multiple people should be able to play it at the same time.

An issue to be solved was that who would then draw the head of the pike, until one of the team members went and bought a real pike head that was then 3D scanned and it provided the basic shape to start designing the structure.

Simultaneously the members of the team started to take roles that were suitable for them. Some worked on the electrical part of the installation, some with social media and fundraising, while AL and AC were working on the operations of the team to get the piece and team members to the event and back safely.

JK - whose intention was originally to give some advice to the team - started working around the clock with HK to get the pike and kantele design to meet aesthetic, functional and structural requirements. It was decided that the team would build 1x1 prototype in Finland and then the second iteration in Reno as it was already too late to ship anything over to the USA.

Problem solving, teamwork, taking initiative

Finding a way to model the sculpture was an important issue to be solved. However, as one of the team members just went and bought a real fish head, which was then 3D scanned, without asking too many questions. It was also great to see that all of the team members were finding their roles and taking responsibility.

4.1.1.9 Going from student documentary to feature-film documentary

While the team was working hard to get the prototype done, many unexpected coincidences started to happen after the project had made its way to the national evening news.

AC received a phone call from the person in charge of the documentary production (EL) for the Finnish Broadcast Company YLE. They were interested in producing a feature-length documentary of the project if a certain documentarian (OP) would be the one making it. However, AL and AC had first to convince OP that the story would be interesting as well as they had then two days time to shoot material that would then convince the YLE production team that the story needs to be told. For this, the team would need to interview influencers in Finland and ask them why the story is important.

By coincidence, an acquaintance (JH) of AL who was working for Burning Man had been invited to give a talk by a local think tank at well-known urban festival in Helsinki about future cities. He then had contacted the current ambassador of United States to Finland as well as other local politicians and influencers.

Because JH was meeting all of these people, he then simultaneously provided access to a number of influencers to interview and them to tell why this story should be told.

Opportunity recognition, taking action, social network

All of the previous work had now turned into an opportunity to make an even greater impact through telling the story for a much wider audience. As time was extremely short, it was crucial to take all the advantage from the existing networks to make every necessary interview in order to get YLE onboard.

4.1.1.10 Finding help in the most surprising places

As the team was getting ready to head over to the United States, there were two major issues troubling the build team's mind: where to get the right kind of plywood for the piece and where CNC cut the plywood.

Finding a place where to CNC cut the wood was relatively easy as the people at the Reno Generator where the team had confirmed a spot to work at helped out, but sourcing the right kind of birch plywood to turned out to be more difficult than anticipated.

As things were getting desperate, HK wrote on Facebook about the sourcing problem, and it did not take long until a friend of a friend of his wrote that she and her husband are on a holiday in Arizona and that they could help out with finding the right kind of material. A couple of days passed and they had found a lumberyard in Los Angeles that had the right kind of plywood. The couple then stopped their holiday, drove to Los Angeles to pick up the plywood and then drove it all the way to Reno, dropped off the plywood and then drove back to Arizona to continue their holiday.

Social networks, opportunity recognition and taking action

To find the materials and a place to cut the materials was solely due to having wide social networks. Finding a place to cut the materials was relatively easy as AL had made the connection while in San Francisco, but finding the materials and having them delivered could be described as serendipitous stroke of luck.

4.1.1.11 Multiple problems during the build-week in Reno

As the team then made their way to Reno and started working, they immediately faced serious problems. A major problem occurred when the CNC machine that started cutting the plywood had different software than the one that had been used to cut the prototype. When running the same code as with

the previous program, the CNC machine stopped, but the blade still kept spinning. This caused the plywood to catch fire, almost burning down the entire CNC shop. There was a problem with some curves of the design that had too many digits in the programming that caused the blade to stop.

Luckily the fire was stopped, but now the problem was to figure out if there were enough plywood sheets to make all the parts for the art piece. Some adjustments had to be made to the code and some parts had to be refitted to the remaining plywood sheets. In the end, the amount of sheets was just exact.

Towards the middle of the week another issue came up. The shared transport that was originally intended to take the piece out to the event was scheduled not to happen. The group then had to organize another transport.

After calling around, the group was able to find a truck, which was agreed to be picked up on Friday that week. On Thursday evening, AL called the truck company and asked about the truck. The person in the truck company asked where is the truck going to be used and AL made then the mistake by telling that the truck is used to transport an art piece to Burning Man. The immediate response from the truck company was: “No, we don’t do Burning Man”.

The situation needed to be solved immediately and after calling around for a while, AL was able to find a truck in South Lake Tahoe that was one and half hours drive away from Reno. After the truck was picked up, the team was ready to pack up and head out to the desert.

Taking action, adaptation

At that point there was no time to waste and action was to be taken immediately in order to find a new transport or otherwise the entire project would have failed.

4.1.1.12 Entering the desert and assembling the art piece

The first batch of team reached the Black Rock City on Saturday, a day before the gates opened. Once the cars hit the ancient lakebed that is also known as the Playa, the team members soon realized that this was not an ordinary day in terms of the weather.

Unusually high winds made it practically impossible to see anything further than 10 meters. Many structures that were thought to be windproof had blown away.

Once the team members made it inside the gates and found the location for the installation, they had no other choice than to wait for five hours for the dust storm to calm down - anything taken outside the cars would have been blown away immediately.

As the dust storm calmed down there was only 30 minutes of sunlight left so the team had to hurry to get the frame of the piece built before nightfall. Good thing was that the piece had been assembled and disassembled a couple of times in Reno so the team was able to assemble it fairly quickly.

Ambiguity, adaptation, taking action

By being stuck for hours in the dust storm gave no other alternative than just to wait. After the storm had calmed down, everybody had to act fast and seamlessly to get the piece up quickly.

4.1.1.13 A week of wonder and serendipity

Once the piece was assembled and the team got settled down, it was time for the most unexpected encounters and experiences. Many interesting individuals crossed paths at the installation to jam, connect with the makers of the piece, and learn to play kantele and hear about Finnish national heritage.

The week left countless stories to be told that cannot all be told here, nor they probably should, but towards the end of the week there were a couple of encounters that are worthwhile mentioning.

One day before the end of the event, HK spent time at the installation jamming with other participants when a bystander showed up at the piece. He was very interested in learning more about the instrument and asked for HKs contact information to later connect. After the event the bystander turned out to be an Oscar-winning composer making cinema scores who was looking for new instruments for his movies such as the upcoming Star Trek movie.

Another interesting encounter happened on the day when the installation was supposed to be burned, a woman came by and asked if the installation could be brought to an event called 'Venice Afterburn' in Los Angeles. HK then asked the rest of the team if he could take the installation to Los Angeles if he could organize a transport for it.

Rest of the team then declined of letting him have the installation, but agreed with him that he could take the instrument part to Los Angeles.

HK and AK then packed their car the same night and drove down to Los Angeles with the kantele. When they reached Los Angeles and the event, the kantele turned out to be a tremendous success as it gathered dozens of people passing by to join and play. So it also happened that while at the event, HK got introduced to one of the producers of the TV show 'Simpsons' who also has Finnish roots in her family, and then got excited about HK and the kantele, and ended up funding HKs business' expansion to the United States.

Opportunity recognition, taking action

If HK had not immediately recognized the opportunity and accepted the invitation to go to Los Angeles with no guarantees of success, but he trusted his intuition and it paid off.

4.1.1.14 Burning the piece and closing the chapter

While the two kantele makers took off to Los Angeles, the rest of the team got ready to burn the piece itself. On Saturday after ‘The Man’ was burned, the team members went to pick the pieces of the installation and proceeded to burn it where the man was burned, in sort of a funeral procession. Some of the team members described the situation as cathartic by being able to let go of the project that had taken so much time and effort in the previous months. Everyone felt extremely joyful and uplifted when carrying the pieces to the fire while other event participants cheered around and gave their thanks for the “gift” that the team had given to the community.

As the team members watched the piece burning to the last bit, they opened a bottle of champagne while some lit cigars to celebrate, and they all reflected on the past few months. It was time to close the chapter and move on to the next one – that turned out to happen sooner than expected.

Teamwork, reflection

This was the culmination of months of planning and working together as a team. Now the team had reached its purpose and it was time to let go.

4.1.2 Reflection summary from Aalto on Fire

Aalto on Fire was a great learning experience for the entire team, but especially for the author. By succeeding in an audacious and demanding project, which

requires a lot from each participant improves anyone's self-confidence to take on new projects as well as providing the opportunity to learn from the other team members.

The elements of entrepreneurial learning that were mentioned by Pittaway et al. (2015) such as 'opportunity recognition, action, problems and adaptation', 'learning from past experience and reflection', 'Dealing with ambiguity, emotional pressure and failure', 'Practicing social skills and engagement' and 'self-efficacy' excluding failure were present for the whole duration of the project. Even though the learning itself was not directly guided towards enterprise, it can be mentioned with a certainty that the takeaways from the experience are educative and will provide understanding to deal with multi-dimensional and complex endeavors.

Aalto on Fire was the first project that was taken to Burning Man from Finland. In the year 2016, a second project, called Koulu (School) on Fire, was taken there with a new team that consisted mostly of new participants, but had the same people in charge. The project was about building a school to the event where a Finnish peer-learning concept 'Koulu', developed by Demos Helsinki Think Tank, was introduced to the event participants.

The second project will provide a good insight how the project managers of Aalto on Fire learned to prepare for their second, even more ambitious project, how they managed to deliver it, and take it beyond Burning Man.

4.2 Koulu on Fire project



Picture 4 © Jami Sarnikorpi

Koulu (School) on Fire was a project that was taken to Burning Man 2016 by a group of Finnish Burners. The core of the project was “Koulu” (meaning school in Finnish) peer-learning concept by a Finnish think tank Demos Helsinki (Demoshelsinki.fi).

4.2.1 Story behind “Koulu” concept

According to Demos Helsinki Founder, (RM) – whose interview can be found below – the first “Koulu” was organized in 2012 in an old mental asylum in Helsinki, which was empty at the time.

The story begins when in the year 2012, the director of Helsinki Festival (Helsinginjuhla.fi) asked RM and his colleagues: *“Why are the festivals as they are today and why aren’t they more like Restaurant Day (restaurantday.org) or Wikipedia (Wikipedia.org)?”*

At the time RM worked as an advisor for Helsinki Festival and they agreed to come up with something like the director had suggested. An old mental asylum for the event was appointed as the venue for the event. The asylum has a lot of small rooms and they had to come up with a concept that was suitable for the venue.

At the same time, RM's friend in London had established a startup called "The School of Everything" (schoolofeverything.com) where anyone could announce a thing that they would teach and then students would join the classes online. RM remembers that the company was not a great success as a web-based solution, but the idea remained: *"What if we could develop a method where we could help a person to discover the things he or she could teach, and then give the person the tools to teach the skill by providing a sort of transformative education and have them understand that they have skills to teach."*

The first "Koulu" festival was then organized in 2012 with 200 teachers giving and 800 students attending the classes.

4.3 Project timeline

The seed for the project was planted in the summer of 2015 when Aalto on Fire team was about to depart to the US. In August 2015, RM contacted AL to ask if it would make sense to take "Koulu" to Burning Man in 2016. AL's response was then "We will see. Let's get this first project done first". Two weeks after returning from Burning Man, AL and RM started planning for the next year's project.

The original intention was to only take people to Burning Man to give the "Koulu" workshops at some of the interactive theme camps to avoid all the intense work of designing and delivering a structure – which turned out to be quite the opposite.

Self-efficacy, taking action

When still recovering from the first project, the idea to start working on something as labor-intensive and stressful did not seem appealing at the time. However, as it the intention was only to take people to the event and not to build a structure, this seemed like a good and fun selling point from RM.

4.3.1.1 Finding funding and realizing the true purpose “Koulu”

The preparations to find funding began quite early in the autumn of 2015. This time it was great to have an experienced group of people to deal with grants. To get funded the project had to provide something much more than taking a group of people to Burning Man. It did not take long when the team realized that rather than just taking the concept to Burning Man and be done with it; the concept should be tested in other low-infrastructure settlements such as refugee camps and slums. This would also be a much better justification to receive funding while giving the team members more sense of purpose – and as the documentary project was still a work in progress, it was a great opportunity to give a whole different meaning for the story.

Adaptation, opportunity recognition

After having the experience of finding funding for the first project, it was easy to understand what was ahead. It was a good to have experienced grant writers available to ease the labor for everyone. By figuring out a better reason why would someone fund the project in the first place, the expected impact will be much greater in many ways.

4.3.1.2 European leadership summit 2016

Burning Man European Leadership Summit (ELS) was organized in Barcelona in the February of 2016. At ELS the team introduced the “Koulu” concept to the international Burner community and gave a presentation about Aalto on Fire project.

The story of Aalto on Fire with all the phases of the project received a raging applause and many people within the international community were really inspired by it. One of the workshop slots at the conference was also reserved for “Koulu” concept. The team gave the workshop and it received lots of good feedback and was confident to take it to the event.

At the same time there was a discussion about the theme of the year 2016 that was ‘DaVinci’s Workshop’. At the event, the center plaza was to be called ‘Piazza’ where different kinds of ‘guilds’ from all over the world were represented. These guild spaces were meant for the communities from all over the world to bring their contribution to the event. They were of course some of the most coveted spaces and extremely difficult to get.

After the discussion, the Finnish participants of the conference got together to discuss the opportunity. It was soon to be decided that they should apply for the larger guild space that was 110 m² in area. Of course at that time, the team did not comprehend the full scale of the space – which they eventually got.

Reflection, teamwork, self-efficacy

The conference was a good venue to reflect and receive feedback on the previous year, but also for the forthcoming. The decision to apply for the space was made mutually as a group, which then strengthened the commitment of each member.

4.3.1.3 Finding the project participants and making preparations

As the “Koulu” team got the space they applied for, they were facing a familiar problem; where to find the people, who are going to design and build it and from where to get the sufficient funding? At that point there was no funding in sight besides a small grant from Burning Man and some donation tickets the group had received.

Finding most of the right people was surprisingly easy. In March 2016 when the event tickets, the project team organized a ticket purchasing party where everyone interested could gather together to buy the Burning Man tickets and get acquainted with other people who were interested going to the event.

There were people from various backgrounds at the ticket purchasing party; software engineers, a crafts teacher, a set designer, marketing professionals, architects etc. Once the tickets were on sale, it took 45 minutes and they were all sold out. 2/3 of the people at the ticket purchasing party were left without a ticket. Luckily there were tickets available for those who were interested joining and committing themselves to the project.

Around the same time, all of the necessary bookings for logistics, workspaces and accommodation were made to avoid the problems from the previous year.

Self-efficacy, reflection, teamwork

By having gone through a bumpy ride the previous year; the team knew all the most common pitfalls that could cause major problems if not taken into consideration in the early phase of the project such as logistics and tickets. Having these things secured gave great sense of security for the rest of the project. It turned out relatively easy to find the right people and it helped to know from the beginning what kinds of skills were required in the project.

4.3.1.4 Co-created design

Once the preliminary team was formed, they began to organize weekly meetings and workshops to start planning the space getting to know each other better. The original intention also was to make a social experiment out of the project with no hierarchies within the team and everyone would have an equal say on everything on the process – as the project proceeded, this idea was dumped soon.

The preliminary setting for the space was that it had to be a classroom with 110 m² in total area, and the centerpiece of the space was to be a “Tree of knowledge”, under which the teaching would happen.

As the team members then began to ideate, many wild ideas regarding the space and materials emerged. Obviously many of the challenges related to delivering a project to Burning Man were unknown for the majority of the team members.

In the beginning there was discussion about making the space out of very high-tech materials, such as nano-cellulose and composites that require a lot of special processing methods. Shipping these things would have also taken a couple of months to ship. However, it was important to give members a chance to present their ideas to give them a sense of ownership.

Around the same time, as the team realized that the non-hierarchical model of management was not working as it did not lead to any decisions and many of the less experienced members also got uncomfortable as they did not know what to do when nobody was appointing tasks for them. Varying incentives and levels of commitment made a completely flat organization impossible to function.

AL and AC took over the management side of the project as the team members organized themselves to take different responsibilities. At that time the most important role was to have a responsible person for the structure itself. The team member who was a set designer luckily stood up and announced that he will do it – obviously some of the architects in the team opposed, but the issue was solved as a group.

Adaptation, teamwork, reflection, conflict

Design processes in general are constantly iterative undertakings where people come up with new ideas and they are then tested and then rethought to make improvements. This was also the case with the experimental management method as the varying levels of expertise and commitment, and inability to make decisions soon implied. There was also a clear conflict as the architects opposed giving the management position for the design. Luckily this was solved soon and the project was able to continue without further drama.

4.3.1.5 Pieces falling in place

As the project proceeded and time was getting shorter, the most determining factor for the design turned out to be the lack of funding because all submitted grant applications were rejected. The team then had to figure out how to build the space in the cheapest way possible out of locally sourced materials while some of the members had to step in and guarantee the finances personally and take the financial risk to get the project delivered. – Which gave even further limitations to the design that turned out to be great for the design and the story of the project.

To support the story of taking education to low-infrastructure settlements where resources are scarce, the team came to conclusion to use recycled materials such as cardboard for the “Tree of knowledge” and coffee bags filled with hay for cushions.

As the team began to prototype the concepts, the biggest concern now was where to source the materials from. Luckily, a similar serendipitous occurrence that happened the previous year, happened again as one of the team members (JS) had been to the Chinese regional Burn and met one of the organizers (D). D was about to move back to Los Angeles from China and she announced that she and her crew wanted to join the project to help out with the logistics and sourcing in the US end, which turned out to be a tremendous asset.

As the summer went by, the project was in a really good shape and progress was made on a good pace. The project managers had learned their lessons from the previous year and knew how to avoid the pitfalls that almost lead to the failure of the previous project. At the same time some of the project members realized that they were not able to make it to the event and then quit the project, while some new members joined.

Adaptation, teamwork, opportunity recognition, reflection

Further limitations to the design and project narrowed down the scope of the design that worked much to its advantage. It also brought more shared responsibility for the team members about finances. Also once again, what the project managers had learned the previous year, helped out a lot to run the project smoothly.

4.3.1.6 Build phase in the US

The first team members flew to the US in mid-August to prepare the build phase at The Generator in Reno, where the previous piece was built as well. In the meanwhile the crew in Los Angeles had found a box factory that had agreed to provide the cardboard and labor for the tree free of charge. Later it turned out that the people at the box factory did not know what they were getting themselves involved.

When the team arrived in Reno on Thursday one and half week before the event was supposed to begin and getting prepared to build the structure, they faced their first problem; the cardboard for the “Tree of Knowledge” which was supposed to arrive on Friday was nowhere near ready. 30% of the cardboard was due to arrive on the next Monday and it was not known when the rest would arrive.

The delayed material shipment was an unfortunate setback, but nothing that was completely unheard of when dealing with projects for Burning Man. – As the ones who had taken part in the previous project knew.

The team learned that it had taken two hours per sheet of cardboard for the box factory to cut the intricate pattern of the tree and there were 80 sheets in total. It was understandable that the box factory people were close to reaching their limits of volunteer work.

At the same time the team in Reno realized that they were understaffed to make all the necessary work before the next Thursday when the team was supposed to head out to the event.

The team then had to adjust itself to the prevailing situation and focus on those things they could get done. This included filling 250 coffee bags with hay, which to be used as cushions. The team also realized that the design of the tree had to be scaled down from the originally intended. At first, this was a big issue for the head designer as it was against his vision, but simultaneously a great learning event what to do when things don't go as planned.

On the Monday before the event began, the team received a message that they could either receive another 1/3 of the materials by Wednesday or the total amount on Thursday. It was then clear that they would have to settle for having total of 2/3 of the materials and to live by it. The team managers also informed Burning Man organizers that they would probably be ready in time as the space

was to be ready on Sunday at 6am. The event organizers were helpful and understanding, and provided more early access entries to the event for those willing to help out to get the space ready in time.

The team also encountered a number of smaller setbacks during the week, but those were solved quickly one way or the other. The lesson in these cases often was that more money was needed to fix those problems than what was expected. This did not help as the budget was already running on deficit.

On Thursday of the build week the team was not as ready as they had planned, but the team had to pack up and head out to build the space and make the best out of what they had.

Teamwork, adaptation, opportunity recognition, taking action

As expected, while working on a Burning Man project, there are many factors that are not under anyone's control – which was the case this time as well. The team then had to readjust their schedule to make everything else as well prepared as possible while working for longer hours after the delayed materials arrived. When knowing that it was impossible to deliver the design as intended, an immediate decision to scale it down had to be made and accept that reality.

4.3.1.7 Building the guild space at Burning Man 2016

The team arrived in the event in the morning on Friday before the event began. When everyone had found their camp and had a good night's sleep, they began to build the space at the Man Base, in the center of the event.

Many other team members then arrived on Friday and the team worked the best they could to get the space finished by Sunday. Also other teams had been facing delays. This included the event organizers who had trouble getting The

Man to function as intended. A new deadline was set to Sunday evening when the area was supposed to be opened to the public.

On Sunday afternoon, the team put all of its efforts to finish in time when in the afternoon the organizers came and told everyone to leave the area for an hour or two – that then later turned out to be two days – and this was completely unexpected by any of the team members.

The reason was that the Man was not functioning as intended. The design for the man in 2016 was modeled after Leonardo Davinci's famous drawing, the Vitruvian Man, and the idea was that the event participants would have been able to rotate the man by turning a lever mechanism.



Picture 2 © Jami Sarnikorpi

It turned out that the gears were not made strong enough to withstand the forces involved and they snapped. The organizers tried to fix the problem, but in

vain. This of course was frustrating for all the teams who had their space around the Man Base and had worked for months to create their spaces.

After a couple of days trying, the organizers finally gave in and set The Man to be static. This allowed every team working around the Man Base to open their spaces on Tuesday night of the event.

Adaptation, reflection

Once entering the event area, a team has to have everything prepared and with them. In case something is missing, it is often too late to fix it. As the team was so worried about their success to deliver in time, it was even impossible to imagine a situation that an external factor could make all those extra efforts insignificant.

4.3.1.8 Running the school

The “Koulu” was finally opened on Tuesday night of the event and the team members began to teach many enthusiastic Burners to share their various skills and know-how. After receiving the teacher training, the teachers were asked to pin down the time and content of their lessons. The lessons varied from how to heal a trauma to drawing labyrinths and Finnish Sauna culture.

The feedback given by the event participants was overwhelming. The most significant impact made in the participants was that the concept empowered many people to understand that they had valuable skills to share, and now they had means to do so. Some even burst into tears of happiness after discovering this.

Running the school was an iterative process that took a couple of days to get running as it was intended. Unfortunately the school got properly functional on Thursday of the event. The team members felt that it was a shame to open the space two days behind schedule since the space was to be taken down on

Friday evening. A couple of more days running it would have been valuable to gather data of the experiences of the attendants that could then be used to adjust the “Koulu” concept for the future.

Friday then came and the space had to be taken down. After taking down the space, the team prepared for final push towards the end of the event. Despite (and because of) all the setbacks and stress, everyone in the team felt that learned a lot about themselves, other members of the team and about teamwork in general.

For the project managers and others who had been involved in the previous project, “Koulu on Fire” provided a good background to reflect on their improvement and what they had learned from their first project.

Adaptation, teamwork, reflection

To get the concept running, the team had to constantly adjust the functionalities of the space and the concept to make them work better and gather the necessary data for the future needs when the concept is taken to refugee camps. There always could have been more time and things to improve, but the reality was what it was.

4.3.1.9 The future of “Koulu”

As for now, the “Koulu” project continues as some of its members are heading out to try out the concept at refugee camps in Nepal, Greece and Jordan. It will be seen, whether “Koulu” could provide a good learning platform to be used among displaced people whose number is ever increasing.

4.3.2 Reflection summary of Koulu on Fire

Koulu on Fire was an interesting experiment that is still ongoing during the delivery of this thesis. The intention is to travel to Nepal in December 2016 and Jordan and/or Greece in early 2017 to give Koulu Workshops. The intention is to test whether the concept could provide a tool for teaching in low-infrastructure settlements.

In the next section this study goes through and analyze nine narratives of entrepreneurs from various fields and different parts of the world. These entrepreneurs have a varying experience of Burning Man culture. The intention is to learn about their experiences in the Burner culture and whether it has impacted them as entrepreneurs. This is intended to provide more insight about the influence of the event and culture on a personal level, as well as whether it has impacted them as entrepreneurs. As these action research case studies above provided detailed information on what it is like to take a project to the event and what can be learned from the experience, the interviews are meant to bring further understanding whether there are similarities in the development of entrepreneurial behavior in varying contexts.

4.4 Burner Entrepreneurs

This chapter tells the narratives of nine different entrepreneurs from different fields and locations, who have been influenced by the Burning Man culture. The impact of the culture on themselves and them as entrepreneurs will be analyzed through the theory of entrepreneurial learning. The themes from each narrative are portrayed in a spreadsheet to allow effortless comparison between the different entrepreneurs.

The intention is to provide a broad perspective how the culture empowers and influences people to act entrepreneurially.

4.4.1 The passionate helper

“SL” is a 38-year-old MBA and a serial entrepreneur from Kansas City, Missouri, has been going to Burner events since 2008 when she got involved with the St. Louis local community. Ever since then, she has been going to different Burn events for about 50 or 60 times - three of these have been Burning Man.

SL as entrepreneur

She started her first company about 7 years ago with a couple of business partners in St. Louis. The company was a digital marketing and business advisory company for startups and non-profits. The choice behind the clientele was that they wanted to help and work with passionate people. Stacey herself states that she rather wants to be fulfilled by helping people make the world a little better place live in rather than choosing clients that bring her the most income.

The company grew up to 20 people in the three and half years she was working there, but then life events happened and she moved to Kansas City to live with her partner, and decided to sell her share to her business partners.

After moving to Kansas City SL started working for a big marketing agency, as she did not have the necessary connections to set up a new business in a new town. She worked with the company for a while, but recently teamed up with two other women to start a small side business that is helping small entrepreneurs to gain confidence and get their questions answered when starting their own business. The goal is to reach passive income stream at some point by selling courses and e-books to new entrepreneurs.

While doing this, SL has been doing marketing and business consulting since last year and she is about to launch a website about transformative change in businesses to help them innovate or think differently.

She runs her businesses mostly from a co-working space where she can meet other entrepreneurs as well while sharing office supplies. She is happy that she can run her own schedule. This way she can be more authentic with her clients and collaborate better with them.

SL as Burner

SL got involved with the St. Louis Burner community through her friends while living there. She had known of Burning Man since 1999, but didn't know anyone who was going there. Her involvement with the community began by accident after her friends had mentioned about an upcoming regional event and she became interested.

Unfortunately for SL, the tickets were sold out, but when she went to ask on an online discussion group. Luckily enough, a person she had never met before gifted her a ticket.

The event was a four-day camping event where she didn't know almost anyone. I camped with some friends of friends and with very few expectations. The event turned out to be one of the best experiences she had had in her life. She felt for the first time in her life that instead of struggling with people, they saw her who she really was and she truly appreciated and embraced that.

At that time she was involved in many different groups and did not want the Burner community to take too much of her time. It then happened that the local St. Louis community approached her to ask whether she would like to take a leadership role in her community, as they knew she had management background and they needed some help, and she said 'yes' to the request.

SL prefers regional events to Burning Man. At the smaller events the focus is much more on the community coming together and bonding through a shared art project or event whereas at Burning Man is more about being open to new and crazy experiences. “There’s still a sense of community at Burning Man and you meet new and amazing people from all over the World” SL says. Those years she has been going, she has been involved in a theme camp that provides bike repairs at the event.

She loves the community and the people within and explains that many people find meaning in their lives through the projects they work on.

The projects enable the community members to take on different roles. Many of them have never been leaders before when they step in to take responsibility as event coordinators or theme camp planners. They work an hourly low-paying job and have never been given the chance to let the inner part of which they really are shine through their profession.

SL says that it is great to see these people after the experience to go back in their jobs and get promotions, go and change jobs or understand what their true value, talent and calling is, and then go and do that. She thinks that the experience and the community within a burn is really the way to unlock the inner potential in people.

Learning from failures

SL also explains that while most of her projects have been successes, there have been some failures involved as well. One time her friend got seriously injured because of their installation.

The hardest one was a big installation that was a climbing tower as many of the people in our theme camp were rock climbers and we wanted to bring rock

climbing to the events. We brought it to several events and it was a great community and people were really excited about it. We really cared about the safety and had a great safety plan.

When we brought it to one event and we were understaffed and made a mistake bringing it out without the whole camp with us. We were normally 10 people with the project, but this time we were only 5 or 6. There was an incident when we were putting the tower together and our typical rigger was not there, but our secondary rigger was there and a pulley got cross-loaded that caused the pulley to break and the entire wall came down. A friend of ours who was helping was under the wall when it collapsed and he then broke his back.

According to SL, her friend can luckily walk again, but it gave a lot of perspective on the events especially when the ticket says, "You may die in this event".

The saying at the events that says "safety third" is not funny any more. Our entire community learned something from it and we got much more responsible.

Burning Man in everyday life

SL thinks that there are a lot of people who are Burners without even realizing that. She thinks that people are much more comfortable in a community where there are a lot of walls and boundaries taken down between them. In these communities people are more real with each other and collaborate naturally. She says that it's a skill that people develop when they are around Burners. "When you interact with Burners, you are more willing to try out new ideas and collaborate".

SL says that people come across in more natural and sincere way as it gives people confidence to try out bigger things and have less fear of failure because they have been to an environment where people are more open to

experimentation and they see that the risk is lower than our society often portrays ideas - "I think that the experience of being a burner shows you that it's not necessarily true".

She says that since she became a Burner, her perception on the world has changed by feeling that she needs to do less for more. SL now feels that the western consumerism model is even more distasteful than before. She is more comfortable living simply and spending her time and money on things that are more beautiful and connective or community oriented. She is sure that being a Burner has played a big part in that.

In the Western society and especially in the US there is a drive to accomplish and acquire, have more money, have a bigger house – and those are the things that feed people's reward engines and their vanity. I feel that myself and a lot of other Burner friends don't fit that model of thinking and I think being a Burner allows the time and confidence to do things that other people would be scared to do.

The impact of Burning Man to entrepreneurial life

SL thinks that being a Burner has given her a lot of confidence as she feels that she has an overwhelming support of her community in everything she does. She feels that she has a community who see her as a value rather than for what she does.

These people see me as a person and I think that is transformational when you have a community surrounding you and believing in you as who you really are. You are a lot less afraid of failure and to take risks. People are willing to catch you.

SL thinks that her business would not be the same if she had never found the community. She thinks that the community has brought out many things that are naturally within her and given her confidence to do things she has done.

I probably would have done things more standard, less collaboratively, more competitively. I think that I would have separated my personal life from my business. It has taught me that there is more strength in collaboration, being more authentic and doing things differently than following a set model that might not make you happy.

SL states that the key takeaway from the experience when running a business that she has become more collaborative and willing to share ownership.

I think there are many leadership lessons to be learned and working in a collaborative environment has helped me realize that the strengths, different skills and characteristics of different people do help me when giving them more ownership rather than more power and money really does help me.

4.4.2 The Lord of The Castle

JL is a 29-year-old entrepreneur from Stockholm, Sweden. Is a founder of a Stockholm-based co-working space called “The Castle”. He visited Burning Man for the first time in 2010 and has been active in the Nordic Regional Burn called “Borderland”.

JL as an entrepreneur

JL has been an entrepreneur for seven years. His projects have varied from implementing the use of reusable coffee cups at universities, writing a cooking book to his current venture called “The Castle” that is a co-working space that he has been working with and its predecessor for the past six years now.

The Castle is the latest version of their co-working space. JL and a couple of his friends started a space called the “Entrepreneur’s Church” in an old church in Stockholm in 2010. Back then it was a reaction to the urgent need for spaces for young entrepreneurs as they grew frustrated with the university not providing spaces. JL and his friends then found an old church and said in a heartbeat that they can take over it and make it profitable.

It then took us for a couple of year to make it functional and then the whole entrepreneurship boom and co-working spaces started to be a thing. After four or five years a couple of investors came to talk to us about expansion. Even though none of us are really interested in scaling as it is not the main driver for us why we are in this, but the idea for expansion became tempting and then we found The Castle.

In simple terms, The Castle is a co-working space, but it differs from most other spaces that often try to create some sort of entrepreneurial hub or a startup center that has very narrow culture. The Castle does not take any companies as members, only individuals. Everything they do in The Castle is from the individual’s perspective.

Rather than having sales training or investor meetings, The Castle offers cozy coffee hours, yoga, wrestling and many other things based on how to build a more inclusive and inclusive culture for individuals, not for companies.

There are about 250 members at The Castle currently, and there are constantly new people moving in and some moving out. The circulation keeps the culture alive as the ones who leave, leave things behind while the new members bring in new ideas, JL states.

JL compares running The Castle to running a school. There are always different things happening and he has to manage that everything is functional. However,

he says that the management's main concern is the culture; how can they make people to be nice to each other, because that seems to be hard.

Since we are so focused on the internal culture, we are uninterested in the external. We have no interest in having lectures that other people want to go. Of course you can say that would be good, but that is waste of our resources in what we are really interested in. There are so many places doing that awesomely so we don't need to.

JL as a Burner

JL heard of Burning Man for the first time in 2010 when a person at his university's entrepreneurship society showed up and said: "I'm going to this awesome festival, who want's to come with me?"

I said yes and then him and I went together. I had no idea what to expect, as I was quite young and immature. When I came back and when people asked who thought it was a regular festival and people kept asking how was it, I had really hard time describing it.

I didn't know how to handle it myself and I didn't know that I was supposed to talk about the experiences. I then told people "Yeah, it was amazing, but I don't think I will go back". I think that I needed to process it a bit more.

Three years passed and JL got back to Burning Man with a bigger group of his friends - that turned out to be a big turning point for him.

I think that was a huge turning point when coming back after 3 years of processing it on my own and then getting this feeling: "Oh yeah, it actually was like this and it was true".

I could then see all of these processes in me that had started three years ago. I also went back in 2014, and we also went to Borderland, the Nordic regional, and I started getting involved there, and I have been going there ever since, but no more Burning Man.

JL has been involved in multiple projects for both Burning Man and Borderland.

During My first year I helped out with a project called The Grand Flat Piano that was a 30-meter long piano in the desert. The second it was our camp that I helped out with, but not that much of a project. In 2014 our project was this 'Mimir' the oracle based on Nordic mythology and did stuff with that.

At Borderland we started a camp called 'Shadowlands' and the next year we started 'Tim's Bar' where the entire idea is to have a low-level, low-threshold, inclusive place so that's the principle behind the bar. Anyone can be the bartender and so on. It's a playful concept that does not scare away people in a way some of the more challenging concepts may.

JL has learned a lot from these experiences and he applies those lessons learned in his work on a daily basis:

What I do for living with co-working spaces and living in groups and collectives. It's a genuine interest of group-dynamics. Learning more about how can we have people living next to each other without becoming dysfunctional. Not a lot of things in society inspire you in that sense.

Of course you have the classic hippie stuff from the 1960s and 70s that in our age feels naïve and too idealistic. I feel that through thorough understanding of the Burning Man principles you get more insight on how a structure can be set up that makes certain things in group-dynamics work well.

I would not call it perfect or ideal in any way, but it's just different – it's really turning the board upside down. That then has the implication that if it can be turned around one way, what are the other ways that it can be turned around. It opens up the possibilities for many more varieties – especially in personal growth.

I used to have this picture of me when I was younger and I was always smaller than the other kids and had that picture of me stuck inside my head for a while. It was only until in the Burner community that I was able to shed this picture.

I remember that I used the metaphor people standing on pedestals. I have been looking up to a lot of people my whole life. It was a huge experience when I realized that I was standing on a pedestal before others and realizing the mutual responsibilities that are involved with that. I guess that in management terms you could say that would be discovering my own leadership and understanding what type of leadership role and skills I wanted to develop.

The community and lessons learned

JL says that he hardly works for any of the administration of the community. Many of his work really hard and he spends time with them, but doesn't make them his core projects.

I'm staying out of that part even though I'm attracted to it. I focus a lot on what kind of contribution do I want to make to the community and to the culture. I'm really putting emphasis on how to include different groups. So I see what we do in the castle is in a way like training for Borderland and there we are also training for The Castle.

JL thinks that the Burner community in Stockholm has a very unique set of role models. He has gone through a lot of different communities such as the startup

and entrepreneurship community that also has its role models, but they are nothing alike.

He says that the most important realization from the experience is to understand that *it is possible*. It is possible to *do* something completely different or to *be* something completely different.

I think it has grown to the extent in me that I can be different depending on the context. I don't have focus myself in being one "JL", I can be many. At the same time, cultures can be different. There's not one norm. A norm is a misunderstanding of reality – there are so many different ways of doing things.

Burning Man and entrepreneurship

JL says that it is really difficult to differentiate personal development from entrepreneurial development. They run their operations and organizations really close to heart and by letting their individual purpose to guide the organization's purpose.

The culture has definitely impacted JL and the other founders of The Castle and it keeps doing so:

All of our founders have been to Borderland and we always get insights and change. We then share these insights together. Maybe the biggest change would be in values – the role models I had before going to Burning Man or Borderland were pretty much about "do cool stuff and make money" or "save the world".

I don't feel that I ever felt deeply connected to any of that. Of course what I could do in life is to make some money and save some people, but the experiences have affected me in a way that I want to have some sort of deeper purpose in everything I do.

JL thinks that The Castle would not definitely be the same if they had never gone to any of these events. The Castle would exist, but it would be something very different, but how, it is impossible to tell.

He thinks that the key takeaway from Burning Man on how to run a business is that it helps to understand the meaning of self-actualization.

Maybe you could compare it to Theory X and Theory Y where Theory X is the view on people that most people are lazy and try to avoid work and we need to manage them. Theory Y is that in the right circumstances people are ambitious and they want to do stuff. That still exists within management, right?

We don't know if we should put boundaries and deadlines. Borderland is the perfect example, that in the right circumstances people do amazing things, but it's really hard to predict and control and it kind of exists in between control and chaos, and that connected to different management theories on how can we organize ourselves to accomplish really great things.

4.4.3 The Maker

GK is a 34-year-old entrepreneur from Vilnius, Lithuania. He is a founder of M-Lab, a mobile digital fabrication laboratory that tours schools to teach modern manufacturing methods for children. He participated Burning Man for the first time in 2007 and is the regional contact for Lithuania.

GK has been involved with different types of projects since 2012. He is passionate about maker movement and introducing the modern, digital manufacturing methods to Lithuanians. His projects have been varying from him and his crew taking to Burning Man, organizing events in Lithuania to a mobile FabLab. Most of them have been volunteer projects.

When talking about the last few projects that I have completed with a group of other people. This year we did interactive workshops of creating instruments. This was a project where we were engaging with people for the first time and there was a lot improvisation and no money involved. In a way it was easier to do because of less of responsibility, but also it's harder to do because of less of a commitment and the voluntary-based approach to how people see things.

Other projects I have been working on before going to Burning Man. One is related to maker movement as it is making its first steps in Lithuania. It [The maker community] has never been so officially named and branded and so. It was just people who were making stuff and gathered in communities. Some of them called themselves as hackers some as makers and some as neither of these. They just had workshop space and they worked together. Now we are on the verge of these things and we organized our first Vilnius Mini Maker Faire event.

When comparing these two types of projects you can find a lot of similarities. You are working in both with volunteers, but in a different type of setting. In both, you have to gather a group of people and have them co-create and co-participate in one event. You need to be flexible enough, you need to find the right skills, you need to get everyone involved while understanding their level of commitment and make it work.

GK organized the first Maker Faire in Lithuania in 2016. Maker Faire is a global brand for 'maker' events whose purpose is to bring together hackers and digital fabrication enthusiasts.

We did this year's Maker Faire without sponsors and I'm looking forward doing it again next year. It is like a project where you have to work with makers, you have to work with people from the education system, you have to organize the event and there are a lot of things you do for the first time.

GKs main project in the 2016 was called M-Lab, a mobile digital fabrication laboratory to educate the youth of Lithuania on digital fabrication methods.

In M-Lab, M stands for the word “meškėnas” that means a raccoon in Lithuanian. It’s a Fab Lab concept that comes from the Fab Lab network, originally started in MIT. Fab Lab is a digital fabrication laboratory and there are around 1000 of these around the world at the moment. In every Fab Lab you find a similar set of equipment controlled by computers. This is seen as the future of manufacturing when everything becomes digitalized.

Our Fab Lab was the size that it could fit into a truck that we would then bring into schools in Lithuania. We brought all the equipment to the schools, and spent two weeks educating the teachers and kids in digital fabrication, software and open source in general. We also noticed that we had to adjust our process as we realized after showing the teachers these tools for the first time in their lives and there was a huge amount of information coming in, they are missing many things, which we believe that would be useful for them.

GK explains that the project was something they had never done before and did not what to expect, but it turned out to be very successful.

When starting it, we wanted to do it for free of charge so that we were able to learn and understand it better.

Within a period for four or five months we have been going to schools for free delivering the workshops and teaching while learning ourselves and also as we knew that we were organizing Vilnius Mini Maker Faire event in May, so we did a sort of a strategic move where the schools that we visited that it would then have to end up in Maker Faire.

It happened so that Maker Faire launched a special Maker Faire concept called School Mini Maker Faire that is a license-free event. That really helped us a lot as all the schools we visited then were in our event.

After these experiences, GK and his team has learned a lot from running a digital fabrication laboratory and teaching the methods for teachers and students. Both, the M-Lab and the Maker Faire were started from the scratch with very little money and enthusiastic people who believed in the idea.

GK got involved with all of these partially because of Burning Man. One can find a great amount of makers at Burning Man who are involved with FabLabs, MIT, Maker Faire etc.

Last year we had this annual summit in San Francisco, the GLC. They had really interesting discussion about the future of global maker movement in the context of Burning Man. All the people who are behind the maker movement they go to Burning Man and this is all a small, but very nice worldwide family. At the conference I had some interesting discussions with people from Make Magazine.

I have also been involved with these things previously. We have attempted to open a hacker space in Vilnius, and I have been involved in bringing art projects to Burning Man, so I had this background already with me. But that was the initial push that made me to enter the maker producers' world.

At the same moment I had the chance to visit my friend's office at AutoDesk. After some discussions I was invited to participate in Fab11 conference and I also got a really good impression that one of the ways to encourage the local digital fabrication advancement would be to tap into that network. I then went to the conference I saw all the possibilities and had the idea to start the mobile Fab Lab. After that I went to Burning Man and after that, I had the time to go to New York Maker Faire.

GK hopes to open a FabLab in Vilnius in the near future. They are currently negotiating with the local business university that has the space and will to do something interesting - the only problem seems to be if the university really understands what a FabLab is.

GK as a Burner

GK heard of Burning Man for the first time in 2007 while he was working as an intern in Reno. He went to see a fire spinning performance where he met people who told him that he has to go to the event - and while being in the area he had no other choice.

Now GK finds it difficult to remember how the first experience really was. He was really excited after coming back, but had really hard time trying to explain the experience to his friends.

Of course it was interesting and amazing, but it's just that now it's impossible to remember what was so amazing. Possibly because having gone there for so many times, it is hard to remember. I wouldn't say that the first time was a life-changing experience. I think it was more of like second or third time when it started to catch on.

I have to say that of course I have changed over the years, but I'm not sure if it is Burning Man that made the change or if it was life in general or all these experiences together. Every year you will get a different experience that can then cumulates over time and you approach the experience and life differently.

The event and the community caught on to Giedrius in 2010 when he started volunteering actively within the community.

When you have a community of like-minded people around you doing fun and interesting things, of course you want to get more involved and when I found out that there are communities all over the world, I decided to approach Burning Man Organization.

Projects for Burning Man

GK has been involved in taking multiple projects to Burning Man. The first project they took to the desert was related to the Baltic celebration and ritual of winter solstice called *Blukis*.

The theme that year was rites of passage so we brought in a rite of passage from Lithuania where people used to drag this tree stump through the darkest winter night to leave all the emotional baggage they from every house they visited with that stump and at the end they burned the stump.

We then had this camp, a documentary crew and 40 Lithuanians going to Burning Man for the first time. Then next year we decided that we wanted to burn the stump and it was one of the regional effigies that are displayed on a prime location and the first sculpture that we burned there.

The later projects include a sculpture called the Lithuanica Birds, an interactive role-play project, a music project in collaboration with the other Baltic States and an instrument making workshop.

GK says that there is a lot one can learn from Burning Man. While making all of these happen, he has been learning a variety of things from working with people to bring projects from ideas to reality: *everyone can talk about things, but when you actually have to deliver, that is completely another thing. You then start to dream more carefully.*

GK explains that one learns a variety of practical things when involved and knowing about the combination of these things are really eye opening. One can be a great project manager, but when he or she has to deliver, it's a completely different thing at Burning Man there are many factors that are out of anyone's hands.

Part of the learning is that this is a project that cannot be managed with all the rules from the book. You have to be able to improvise, act on your instinct etc. Basically, if you are able to do it there, you are most likely able to do it anywhere – It's not New York, it's Burning Man.

He says that every project is a different one and depends on the setting. It is not the same thing to deliver a project to Burning Man as it is to establish a company or construct a building that is safe and according to the regulations.

However, there are commonalities in every project that one can identify. These include working with people, planning, being ready to iterate very fast and managing the project. One must also accept that there is a chain of command.

The human factor is really crucial. You can always have very good skills in organizing things and delegating tasks, being there on time and so on. However, everything can collapse when you have to work with people who are not actually working for you. This can also happen in real life when people are working for your company's project and all of a sudden a headhunter appears and takes your employee away.

You have to remember that there is a certain level where people are motivated by money and the other where they work for the self-esteem they want to get. When you are managing a project at Burning Man, it is really important to remember that it has to feed everyone's self-esteem. Otherwise you lose the people when they lose interest.

Burning Man in Lithuania

GK explains that the Lithuanian community started in a very organic way when people with similar interests got together after coming back from the event and shared their experiences. Over the next few years more and more people went and they finally started their regional Burn.

“Lithuanica Birds” was the project that really brought the community together and now the Lithuanians have a theme camp named after that and has become so popular that they cannot accommodate everyone who wants to join.

They have also organized some local events such as an annual art bike parade and the network of Burning Man has allowed them to bring in a variety of different types of events such as TEDx and Maker Faire.

Burning Man and everyday life

GK admits that because of him being highly involved, he has met a great number of people in Lithuania.

You have this general status of being interesting to people who want to go there. You have this position of actually being able to help them, because you know how to do it and you know that they need your help, but this is actually not something that you really wanted.

He also explains that there are many people around him who don't identify themselves as Burners, but they are passionate people in what they do and make amazing things happen. He wants to bring these people to Burning Man to show them this world and the people, and help them understand that there are so many of these kinds of people out there.

After working with these people you know that they are the ones that you can rely on, who will deliver and will show up when needed. They are the people that I was most excited about seeing there. I hope that next year they will show up with their friends who are equally awesome.

4.4.4 The Cultural Hacker

MZ is a 36 year old entrepreneur from Palo Alto, CA, USA. His main work is at The Institute for The Future that is a think tank in Palo Alto, California, researching the commons, the future of work and education, protesting, and governance. Majority of MZ's time is spent on implementing spaces that include Freespace in depressed urban environments, Communitere in post natural disaster zones and a refugee camp in Greece that he helped to start.

Freespace

Freespace is a collaborative community space concept that has spread from San Francisco to 17 different cities. The concept came about of the National Day of Civic Hacking that is a nationwide hackathon in the USA. MZ says that the best way to win a hackathon is to hack it and ignore the rules.

Instead of the National Day of Civic Hacking, we were able to rent a warehouse in San Francisco for a Dollar a month and declared June of 2013 The National Month of Civic Hacking. Essentially we applied the hackathon format, but extended it over the course of a month. The concept was really just to provide a blank canvas, a tabula rasa, for the community to use with the only rule being that no money is allowed and everyone is invited.

MZ explains that the concept of Freespace was to provide a blank canvas for the local community to use with the only rule that no money was allowed and everyone is invited in the space. In the beginning there was nothing inside and people started bringing couches, chairs, a soundsystem, instruments, paint,

plants and basically launched a number of project including a community garden, a free bike share and a project called “The Learning Shelter” to train homeless people on 3D printing, programming etc.

Within the first 30 days of Freespace 119 events were hosted in the space. According to MZ, this was possible because of the ‘open-source’ concept.

By looking at a physical platform eventually. We wound up doing that in San Francisco and started getting inquiries from all over the world, and have since done 17 additional Freespaces in different cities. From the original one we got invited to the White House as champions of change for kind of new concepts in civic engagement and civic hacking by not just creating apps, but looking at kind of a physical realm.

Communitere

Communitere was originally started by Burners Without Borders (a grass-roots humanitarian aid organization founded by Burners) member, SB in Haiti after the earthquake in 2010.

Sam had been doing post-disaster work starting in Thailand after the tsunami in 2004 and then he did other deployments in Peru and few other places. In Haiti he started up Communitere, which is essentially a physical space that is a landing pad and a launching pad for individuals and organizations that are interested in getting involved in post-natural disaster space.

The traditional way of getting involved with such activities is to donate money to the large NGOs like the Red Cross or UNICEF. In Haiti, there was no tourism infrastructure such as hostels or other places for people to stay, so that was one of the things they set up first was a place where people can stay. They get picked up from the airport and have a place to sleep, clean water, food and Internet in a secure place.

In Haiti, Communitere helped to build a number of different alternative building concepts that in the course of building became additional housing for people to stay in Port au Prince. Since then they have expanded to Tacloban, Philippines and Katmandu, Nepal.

Essentially the space itself is a resource for groups to have meetings, there's a computer lab and tool lending service. That is why it's referred to as a resource center.

From what I have seen in the field of post-disaster relief, Communitere is one of the best models. I have gone to Haiti half a dozen times and I was asked to help out with some of the projects I was doing down there with not that traditional post-disaster work, but more cultural – in organizing kind of open mic, pecha kucha style events, collaborative art projects with residents of Cirque du Soleil. After doing that that, I was asked to join the board and I have been there for almost two years.

Refugee camp in Greece

MZ got involved with a refugee camp in Greece after receiving an email from a person who had been spending a lot of time in Greece. It had been clear that the Greek government or the NGOs such as UNHCR were not able to handle the situation. He heard that they were looking for a project manager to start a refugee camp there and no experience of doing refugee camps was required.

They really saw that the system was broken and they wanted to try something new that involved showing up in Greece and in Turkey. While touring around, I went and saw about 20 to 25 camps all over Greece and Turkey. Looking at the infrastructure, the toilets, the showers, the social spaces, how the refugees themselves set up their own camps and clusters such as spaces to sit and have tea. I really first observed and then found a building, then signed a

memorandum of understanding with the Greek minister of migration so we could be an official camp and essentially renovated 6000 m2 abandoned factory into a proper living space.

The most important thing was to ask the refugees what they wanted. That is a seemingly obvious thing, but a big departure from how the traditional aid system works.

MZ mentions the toilets being one good example that needed to be made differently.

All of the camps had plastic portable toilets that were western style and when little children went to use them by themselves, then would shit on the floor and half an hour later they were dirty again after they had just been cleaned. The refugees told us that they wanted squat toilets with a hose.

They agreed that if we provided that, they would clean the toilets themselves and that is exactly what has happened. We don't have a wash sector lead that is usually how it works in these camps who hires a contractor to manage the sanitation.

MZ mentions the toilets being just one example. He emphasizes user-centered design process where one normally ends up with much more appropriate design that costs less money and creates a sense of agency and responsibility for the residents themselves that is one of the challenges of being a refugee by being in a situation where dependency is created because one can do nothing for him or herself.

That has really been one of the main goals of the space to have people kind of return a bit to normality – especially the Syrians. Five years ago they were living normal lives.

You can either design a refugee camp closer to a nursing home where you have to do everything for people or an apartment building that essentially needs a property manager. Of course it's a bit more complicated than that when you have to deal with mental trauma, conflict, lack of medical care, lack of education. So we are trying to strive for is to create a normal living situation for these people.

The camp is now only half-built and the team continues to develop social and medical spaces. They are essential as the current situation in Europe looks like that the residents are going end up spending a long time there.

On a personal level, MZ sees himself as more of a designer, builder and operator. He is now keen to learn more about the global refugee situation in Africa, Middle East and in Asia, but also potentially in the destinations in Europe to find out more about when the refugees actually receive asylum and what is their living situation and their prospects for finding a good living situation for themselves.

MZ as a Burner

MZ has been going to Burning Man 10 times out of 11 last years. Originally he ended up going there just by being in San Francisco. Some of his friends were going and they convinced him to join, and he was immediately enchanted by it.

It was like nothing I had ever seen before. I got oriented by a good friend who gifted me a ticket. After getting proper orientation said to him "thank you for getting me here, thank you for helping me getting my bearings and now I need to go wander on my own, because there was just so much that I wanted to take in.

What I loved about it that I could just take a walk or a bike around the block and know that I was going to see many things that I never thought about before or

seen before. That kind of reminds me about traveling to a new city or a new culture where it's just a whole new experience that is just omnipresent there.

It's still not quite the same after ten times, but it still has those moments of complete immersion into something new. I think that the dust storms, the darkness with the lights, the fire... It still has that newness after all these years. It's not that everything is new, but lots and lots of stuff are new and surreal. You know, watching art cars slowly drive away in a dust storm... Things that are very surreal. Even though now you can put the pieces together, it still has that newness.

MZ got a really strong insight this year after coming back from Greece and straight to the event.

I came straight from Greece to the playa this year. One of the things in Greece is that there's a big need to construct housing for people. You know they have spent hundreds of millions of Euros from the European commission, but still people are living in sub-standard conditions, and there's only 57 000 migrants in the whole Greece.

When I arrived to Burning Man, I had this feeling of shock at how much is done there in a week by amateurs, and it really made me feel that we could do more. If everyone does their part, if we let the refugees to build themselves, it could be knocked out in a matter of weeks instead of this persistent multi-year or multi-decade suffering.

Lessons learned

Ever since MZ started going to the event, he has been part of multiple projects. Most of them have been theme camps such as camps called "Fractal Nation" and "IDEATE". As MZ builds social spaces in his daily life, he has found that he

can do the same at Burning Man. He is also a regular speaker in different camps at the event.

MZ says that the most important learning from these experiences is to see how one can work with different people and how people work in these kinds of environments.

You do learn a lot about people and some of them windup skipping out on their responsibilities and don't know how to use a hammer or whatever. Some people just give up. I think it's a really good testing ground to see how people are and what they are able to accomplish.

MZ doesn't think that Burning Man affects his life too much on a daily basis. It is just one of the social groups that he is part of. He states that he likes his social interactions to be linked to his personal and professional ambitions, and having a like-minded community around him is extremely helpful in having the confidence to continue.

He does not see that the experiences have affected him too much as an entrepreneur. Of course he sees value in the global community and how Burning Man has been able to replicate itself.

The things I work on, I try them to be replicable so I think there's some inspiration from the global network and they have set up a way in which they can empower people in different cities to make it their own. That's what with Freespace having lots of different ones, Communitere having different ones. I think it is fascinating things when you have people united around an ideology or a way that they would like to see the world and to provide the resources for them to be able to do that.

4.4.5 The Thinker

RM is a 41 year old entrepreneur from Helsinki, Finland. He is a founder of Demos Helsinki, a Finnish think tank that is focused on foresight and future studies. RM attended Burning Man for the first time in 2016 as part of a Finnish project Koulu on Fire.

RM as an entrepreneur

RM has considered himself as an entrepreneur for about 15 years and of those he has worked 11 years in the field of research.

The starting point for Roope has always been that “*Wouldn’t it be great to have X in the World*” and he has realized that entrepreneurship is a really good approach to make those things happen. He also thinks that on the side of civic activism enterprise is a good way to approach those problems.

RM’s daily life consists of early mornings and late evenings. He is in a manager position so he has to oversee that things function and happen internally. He is also involved in a lot of sales work so he needs to meet clients frequently.

RM as a Burner

RM went to Burning Man in 2016 for the first time. He had heard of it for the first time in 1996 when he was living in London a friend of his came to him with an issue of *Wired Magazine* that had an article about the event. “*Look at this! The most disgusting thing ever! Naked hippies in the desert!*” Ever since then RM was intrigued by it.

The article gave a pretty harsh picture of the event and that might be the reason why RM had not gone before. He also says that he is the kind of guy who does

not do things by himself. When he got to know that more and more people - especially those around him - are going there, he started to lean towards going.

Around 8 years ago I came across in some “geeky circles” that people were talking about that by organizing ourselves in a new way, we could get things done more efficiently. Examples of these are open source and Internet that don’t have a central, hierarchical structure.

I have spent a lot of time in those circles in Finland and internationally. I haven’t been that fanatic about it that it would be the only way to organize ourselves in the future, but it is undeniably fascinating idea. I remember someone telling me that we should bring Burning Man to Finland and to Mikkeli.

I started to find out about the whole concept and that there’s more to it than just the harsh environment. I learned that it has a lot to do with the non-hierarchical structure of organizing co-creation and people. Then I ran into a bunch of people who had gone there before and realized that it would be possible for me to get there as well. I also thought that it would be great to take something with you instead of just showing up. It was then great when I realized that we had the “Koulu” concept that we could then take there, as I’m the kind of person that I want to get things done.

Koulu on Fire

The story behind “Koulu” is that the manager of the Helsinki Festival was excited about the same things as RM and Demos Helsinki. He had come asking “Why are the festivals as they are today and why aren’t they more like Restaurant Day or Wikipedia?”.

RM had been an advisor for Helsinki Festival and they agreed to come up with something like that. An old mental asylum for the event was appointed as the

venue for the event. The asylum has a lot of small rooms and they had to come up with a concept that was suitable for the venue.

At the same time, “RM’s friend in London had established a startup called “The School of Everything” where anyone could announce a thing that they would teach and then students would join the classes online. RM remembers that the company was not a great success as a web-based solution, but the idea remained: *“What if we could develop a method where we could help a person to discover the things he or she could teach, and then give the person the tools to teach the skill by providing a sort of transformative education and have them understand that they have skills to teach.”*

This was an idea that was very similar to Burning Man that it is the sum of its parts. It has a certain platform that is called the “five-finger method” and by utilizing that people can gain and provide the experience. We have done rigorous testing afterwards and we have found out that it is functional.

The first “Koulu” festival was then organized in 2012 with around 200 teachers and 800 students attending the classes.

RM thinks that the [Koulu on Fire] project went as he expected. He hoped that there would have been more time to give the workshops, but that the team got enough feedback to develop the concept more suitable for the environments where there is low infrastructure and people have short attention span. All in all, he thinks that it was a very successful test.

He understands that the rest of the team found it very stressful during the build phase as there was a lot of uncertainty in the air due to the delays in the material shipments and being understaffed, but looking back at these moments, he can see that these were also great bonding experiences.

Now that the concept's next destination is most likely going to be a refugee camp in Nepal, I can say that it would otherwise be impossible to be happening unless we wouldn't had done Burning Man first, and I'm excited to see where it will be going later in the future as there are so many people who are excited about it. Now the problem is how to coordinate the project.

RM also states that it is important to understand that in all civic activity the process is much more important than the final outcome. That is very different compared to running a business where profit needs to be generated.

The First Burn

RM says that the preparation was really important and the team did a lot of preparing.

It was interesting as you have so many of the instructions everywhere and even that is chaotic to some extent.

I can still say that it was some of the best times of my life when we were planning the Koulou things together with people I didn't even know that well, and we were able to share the excitement and plan the forthcoming.

Burning Man itself was very much like RM had imagined it to be, but he was not able to foresee the scale and diversity of the event.

What then surprised me was the scale and diversity of everything. I think that the planning part is one of the key reasons why people experience it so strongly as people understand that they cannot just show up there.

What was the most exciting to me was the principle of immediacy where you just have to accept that you are wherever you are at any given moment and making any plans is more or less useless as everything over there is co-created

and does not come from somewhere above. It has so many moving parts in the whole entity and that creates a special feature to it.

By the diversity RM means that that as there are so many different factors present, it is impossible to crystallize the experience into one sentence or try to explain what it is.

I had the memory that you can always reflect on the experience and you can always get new ideas from it. Even trying to understand the whole thing is inspiring as such. Also the multi-sensory nature of the experience is interesting.

Trying to make sense of all of this made me understand that a great deal of the participants has their own projects like we had our Koulu. All of these people have come here with something that has been driving them and here they want to display it. It made me understand that we had come a long way side-by-side with these people before we even got there. That gave a great bonding feeling and a sense of being equal with these people.

RM says that it's a cliché to say that the human encounters and interactions are the best part of the event, but it he says that it is true, and it was also something that he wishes he would had done more.

It was interesting with all of these interactions that the setup of the discussion was already quite different so you didn't have to do that much small talk, but you were able to go directly into deeper discussions. Someone asking you: "How is your Burn going?" and you can immediately start a discussion about space or your relationship with Earth or other topics that would otherwise take a long way to bring to the discussion.

RM felt that the power of Burning Man is that it gives people background to reflect on. He thinks that why Burning Man catalyzes creativity is that people can learn two types of things there:

The first one is the new way for people to organize themselves and the creativity co-creation with people and that they are very powerful. That is obvious and many people draw their inspiration from this.

The second thing is that a great deal of the people there go back to their every-day jobs where there's necessarily not that much creativity going on and the organizational structures are very traditionally structured with the roles of employees, managers and owners.

The fact that you can build an urban system that has neither markets, nor hierarchies, and no institution that is responsible for taking care of everything, should not be even possible according to our prevailing economic theories – at least not on this scale – and this is a complete anomaly in the light of these theories.

Our traditional perception is that in order to anything happening on this scale – even for a week – there should be a central organization to take care of everything. In order to allocate resources such as food for those who need it, we should have a massive planning or market to take care of that. Burning Man has neither of those.

You can draw two different conclusions from this: first one is that you can co-create anything and the second is that you understand that things could be different on the systemic level. How this then relates to entrepreneurship and innovation is that your thought process can shift from creating new products and features in them to understand much more levels of abstraction and new kinds of systems.

As an example RM says that one can normally think that “Wouldn't it be great to have a different type of phone that would have certain features” to think that

“Wouldn’t it be great to have a communication system that would operate entirely without any phones”.

This makes me understand why all of these Silicon Valley entrepreneurs like to go there is because their approach is that what they want is to disrupt markets instead of creating new products.

RM also says that the experience allows one to zoom out from the ‘status quo’ and think differently:

You could say the cliché that the experience expands your horizon as it makes you understand that instead of observing individual phenomena you realize that behind each individual phenomenon there is some kind of system from where they emerge and that you could change the system. It helps you to understand complexity of different systems and how to navigate your way within them, and understand that they could be different. We can all read books about these different systems, but at Burning Man you can actually go and experience a new kind of system!

Burning Man and Finland

RM is curious to know whether it would be possible to create something new to the culture and bring it to the next level in the Nordics. He mentions that Finns have a strong tradition in creating things together, but celebrating it and using it as a medium of expression is something new instead of copying the existing models of Burning Man.

We have the traditional term of “talkoot” (barn raising), but that has happened mainly out of necessity due the scarcity of resources within the society. Bringing this celebratory approach to the creation could bring it to the next level.

Burning Man and everyday life

By having the experience, RM says that he believes in new ways of collaboration and organization even more. He also says that he is now able to take things a bit easier and focusing more on the moment than before. He also admits that his consciousness has been expanded and he is able to think about systems a bit better than focusing on individual things.

It has also helped me to show respect towards the founders [of Burning Man] when establishing new things without having a plan what they are going to turn out to be. There is sort of a governance at the event that is the Burning Man Organization, but instead of making executive decisions and pre-emptively banning things, they let things get a little bit out of hand and see how the community responds, and then act upon it. This is completely the opposite how most organizations function – especially governments, which always try to regulate in beforehand.

Burning Man and entrepreneurship

RM says that as experimental governance is already part of Demos Helsinki's portfolio, the experience has highly motivated him to put more efforts towards this. It would also be interesting to test this kind of governance within Demos.

It's also interesting to see how far does the organization allow things to develop before they take a stand or make executive decision on emerging problems, but rather see if the community is able to take care of that. I would like to try this out more in our business.

How Burning Man has been able to scale itself to almost every corner of the planet also fascinates RM:

I have always been interested in creating new things that have not existed before to this world. What is truly fascinating is that Burning Man has been able to expand itself all over the planet with hundreds of thousands of people who have been influenced by it, but they only have 70 paid employees working there. As they are not a digital product, it's fascinating how they have been able to scale up. It would be great to be able to create something that would scale up in a similar way.

As the most important aspect that the event and the culture cause in terms of entrepreneurship, RM identifies the “can do differently” attitude.

You go into the place and realize that not everything has to stay the same way as they currently are. Especially in that kind of entrepreneurship where you see that something could be done differently.

Especially if you have been part of a project at Burning Man, you get the sense of ownership and being part of the event creation. If you succeed in your project, it also helps you realize and gives confidence to make your other ideas into reality - Also the fact that you are able to observe things from a higher level than the “average Joe”.

What RM would like to point out about Burning Man is that people rarely get any individual problem statements at the event as they do in a trade show or an exhibition, but they get much more surface to reflect on.

In that way you will broaden your own perception. Because of the whole experience is much more comprehensive than going to Slush for instance, I understand that it would be difficult to try to sell this to the Aalto University Entrepreneurship program. However, I must say that when I visited Y-Combinator, the top startup accelerator in the world, they told me that the schedule of the summer batch has been tailored in a way that everyone gets to go to Burning Man after the program is finished.

4.4.6 The Instrument Maker

HK is a 49-year-old instrument designer and manufacturer from Rääkkylä, Finland. For the past 26 years, HK has been reinventing the Finnish national instrument, kantele. HK participated Burning Man in 2015 as part of Aalto on Fire project where a group of Aalto University students and staff designed and delivered The Pike of Mana, a mythical beast from the Finnish national epic, Kalevala, to Burning Man.

HK as entrepreneur

Ever since 1990 taking over their family business, HK has been manufacturing kanteles and kantele accessories. During this time, HK has modernized the traditional Finnish instrument.

I have developed many modern concepts that partially are based on old kanteles and instruments related to them, but they have a lot of new features. The basic idea has always been in my thinking that how they could perform in this day and age.

Making a universal instrument based on the fact that kantele has a unique sound that has strong traditions. I have always believed in the sound of kantele and that it could have more universal use and meaning beyond the Finnish domestic market and national culture.

HK's family has a strong tradition in kantele music. His father is the founder of their family business and has been making kantele's for 59 years. HK's sister is a leading kantele musician and pedagogist. She has performed in many renowned venues such as Carnegie Hall. She is also the first teacher of kantele music in Sibelius Academy in Finland, and has created a higher-level education in kantele music.

HK describes himself as a pioneer in his field. He rather identifies himself as more of a product designer and developer rather than a CEO because the company could not exist without his vision, background and experience.

When working in a small company where everyone's input is so significant, it is really difficult to be something else because we are not talking about startup that has multiple passionate co-developers.

My vision has been unique and nobody else has had similar background that I have had. A typical year for me includes 4500 annual working hours that is pretty much the triple than the average Finnish work input. It has mostly been design work that I have been doing by myself. Of course it consists of meetings with different types of people, but mostly it's been on my shoulders and I have had to design the products and the manufacturing.

HK and Burning Man

HK was invited to join the Aalto on Fire team in June 2015 when the team had come up with the concept for the art piece.

It was fascinating from my point of view as I am the leading developer of a very small industry and when people normally get together and design things for an existing need when you are an entrepreneur, but when all of a sudden people ask you to join a defined project where the team is making a pike-head kantele. That is something completely different that you could not ever imagine coming up with and especially the context - When making something for Burning Man, you cannot have your normal thinking involved.

At this point I was in a situation that we were not making something very finely defined instrument, that has certain specifications, but the project was sufficiently open when I joined it and then letting myself go in the creative flow and embraced the uplifting appreciation and respect of the team as everyone

accepted me with enthusiasm - In that kind of situation, everyone wants to give his or her best.

HK points out how Finns are usually not so open to new ideas while talking behind backs and thinking what could the other people steal from me? - This was the complete opposite.

I would compare it to a jazz jam where an established performer joins in and enjoys the respect of the rest of the band and the spirit can provide a base for a great improvisation. In this case, the instrument was the improvisation.

HK believes that the project will have a huge impact in his business in the future. It has now been a year since the project and HK has had plenty of time to reflect on the experience.

It's been a year now since the experience and I have had the time to reflect and the idea how to design kanteles has clarified to me even more in terms of what are the aspects that work internationally and what are the elements which influence on that.

If you think that I have spent over 25 years in internationalizing and modernizing kantele and thrown myself in that. There are not that many people that can do that within a small market that has no guarantees of succeeding. Even if it would succeed culturally and as an instrument, there are still no guarantees of succeeding economically.

During and after the event in 2015, HK made many connections that may have a profound influence on the rest of his life and kantele as an instrument.

In a way, the experience of Burning Man and all the events and connections that followed can create an international significance for the work I have been doing for 25 years, as the timing for all this was more or less perfect.

The instrument itself was an imaginary improvisation and I had only imagined how it could perform, but had no idea until we reached Reno. There was a lot of good social interaction around the kantele and we got invited to Venice afterburn as the only ones outside the Venice Beach community.

We also made a connection with Oscar winning composer Michael Giacchino at Burning Man that then continued in LA and has later continued. It's hard to tell where that will lead. While at the After Burn we got acquainted with the Simpsons producer Bonita Pietila and that is still in the process. Pietila has a great global network in the music circles. Once we are ready to begin working towards to that direction and we can see where that can lead.

All in all, the experience was a great change in perspective, and that happened to be timed perfectly and can possibly create a whole different meaning for all of my previous work.

Lessons learned

HK says that the project allowed him to grow professionally and as a person. The project taught him a lot about volunteer teamwork, but more importantly, it clarified his mission as a human being.

Understandably I was working with a completely different team than with whom I had used to. I learned a lot about people, their working habits, resources and shortcomings. For instance how will a group process and decide on multiple issues and how can you succeed or fail in them - I can say that I learned a lot about people and working in a group.

The second thing is that it is important to really get to know people. Especially what can happen between men is that there are wrong interpretations if egos collide. Even though I mean well and I'm doing my best for the team, some may feel that this person is taking too much space in the mutual project. Of course

now I would take more time in the process to get to know people and become friends and then avoid the clashing egos.

The most important thing that I learned that my mission as a human being was clarified: "I want to be able to create a safe space for everyone to be able to show who they really are and do their best." Being in such space can lead to unexpected outcomes.

The experience has also had a profound impact on how HK runs his business, allowed him to come up with a new innovation and has strengthened his personal and professional story.

In my case there was a complete change in perspective that then allowed creating a new innovation. Of course that can happen elsewhere, but it helps to jump into something completely different every now and then you can see serendipitous things emerging from the most unexpected places. It also gives you a lot of perspective and access to new networks. You also learn many new things about yourself.

It has clarified my focus and understanding, and has given me even harder drive to work within the past year; "Fuck the end result; let's just get this done!" I think that by believing in yourself opens up all of your senses.

The story of being in Burning Man has also brought many new partners in Finland as people want to be part of that story. In this time when things are more unconventional compared to the past and the prevailing discourse is open development.

In terms of Kantele, many people have been willing to give their work for free because they feel sort of national pride in that. The story with Burning Man and the publicity has boosted this even more.

4.4.7 The Dreamer

GJ is a 34-year-old entrepreneur from Stockholm, Sweden. He has been an entrepreneur for his entire adult life. GJ got involved with Burning Man in 2009. Since then he has been part of multiple project and he is one of the founders of Borderland, a Nordic Regional Burn.

GJ as entrepreneur

GJ started his first business when he was 18 years old. Back then he built servers for small businesses. From there he became a tech consultant, but for festivals and theatre. According to his words, he got into the softer side of technology.

After graduating from university, GJ got really into entrepreneurship as he started promoting it. He started a national entrepreneurship competition in Sweden called *The Entrepreneurship Chase* that ran for one year in Chicago and 3 years in Sweden.

I ran a for-profit company bringing in sponsorships and grants to run events connecting young entrepreneurs with established businesses. So then it was I guess in event marketing industry or the entrepreneurship support industry.

After that, GJ ran a maker space in Stockholm that was in 3D printing and technology consulting. While doing this, he has done management and innovation strategy consulting for the last 7 years in different shapes and forms.

These days focuses on being a professional speaker and developing the Swedish Burner community.

I consider it [the community] being an entrepreneurial venture, but it is more of social entrepreneurship, trying to make change.

GJ as Burner

GJ had heard of Burning Man for the first time in 2002 when working at LARP (Live Action Role Play) festival. He already planned to go since 2003 since it seemed a cool thing to do. In 2009, GJ and his friend finally went.

It was because of curiosity and it seemed like a place to go. At the time I didn't know anyone who had been there before, only heard third-hand about it.

GJ has been involved with different art projects that the Swedish community has taken to Burning Man. In 2010 the Swedes built a 25-meter long grand flat piano in Gothenburg and then shipped it to the event.

In 2012 he was the art lead for an installation called Naglfar, a full-scale Viking ship that was brought to the event and then eventually burned there. GJ was also one of the founders of the Nordic Camp at Burning Man, but is not involved with that anymore.

GJ has been involved with a project for Burning Man to buy a large amount of land called Fly Ranch near BRC. He worked on the business plan to fundraise millions of dollars of private money. He has also given guided tours for Burning Man staff, theme camps and artists.

While working on the different projects, GJ has learned a lot from each

First one: learning how to deal with international shipping, trying to get two pallets of art from Gothenburg to Black Rock City through customs. On a boat from Gothenburg to New York, on a train from New York to Los Angeles and a truck from Los Angeles to BRC. That was quite a learning, including customs and regulations, having it sprayed down for parasites before getting it on a boat and all the stuff required to do international shipping.

With Borderland I have learned a lot. Once you get up to some size as we are now with our budget reaching up to half a million. It involves 1200 people, permitting from police, from the fire department, it requires government relations – not just the formal ones, but building trusting relations with people in government.

Then of course writing the business plan for Fly Ranch that how does the process of raising 10 million dollars as a donation actually look like.

GJ has fully immersed himself in the Burner lifestyle. He shares a house with five other Burners and most of his social network are Burners - those who are not, will soon become Burners, GJ states. He also points out how versatile and powerful the network is.

I either get to know people through the network or I bring them into the network. Today I see it as my life.

The power that I see in the network is that I can get a banker, a lawyer, an accountant, a carpenter within an arms length.

GJ has also been active in making the Burner community in Stockholm visible to the greater local community. He has been able to bring in different types of people to the community to collaborate. He points out that organizing events in the city and having a space for the community to gather are essential.

The community has its own space called The Node. It is a 300m² space in an old office building. When they first started, it was basically cubicles, but they invited a number of people and told them that they can do anything they want with the space.

People came in and started taking down walls and put some new paint on it. It is now a space that has a yoga studio, a bar, a conference room, a meditation and relaxation space, a music studio, a workshop. All of this has been created by an individual initiative within the community guided by the ten principles of Burning Man.

The community organized an event called The Urban Burn in the spring of 2016. The event was a huge success and brought a lot of different types of people together.

I mean, everything is so entangled – it's art, it's science, it's startups... I mean, it has become a really interesting startup network if you want to meet startup people. When I pitched Urban Burn for people, I went to Stockholm hardware meetup. Then people from the hardware community would come and build blinky lights.

Also within the arts community, we are sharing a building with "Satan's democracy" (satansdemokrati.se) that is a really interesting, interactive and immersive theatre project. They have learned participation from us and we have been really inspired by how they have done art. People have jumped back and forth between these organizations.

Our landlord, one of the Stockholm's largest landlords, loves us. We have been in conversations with them how do we actually develop a city.

GJ has also been working with local and international authorities to give them consultation on how to create culture.

The city of Stockholm contacted me, because we want to know how you guys do culture. I have also been contacted by the European Commission who is asking questions how they can learn from Burning Man to deal with the migration crisis in Europe.

Right now, we are planning an event to talk with the city of Stockholm and with Nacka, which is the local municipality where The Node is located, and the property owners' association of Stockholm to have a conversation on how we can take the participatory culture of Burning Man to design urban planning processes and increase citizen involvement in urban planning issues. It sort of started to become an authority, a thought leader – Burning man represents global thought leadership.

By being involved with Burning Man has definitely made marks on GJ - for the better.

I started to look at the world as something I have the power to change. I look around and I see things that I could choose to do something about. If I don't like it, I can make it my way. It is a very empowering insight.

He also states that the experience has guided his perception much more towards value-based way of doing business and concludes that many companies have already embraced the thought model of Burning Man.

I already was doing that, but Burning Man gave me more legitimacy for that. I can run my business based on how I want the world to be and not on management bullshit or the way people tell you that businesses should be run. That might be often prioritizing my own well-being and the well-being of others before financial profit. Never putting finances in the center building my organizations or my projects. It is more value-based leadership.

It's funny that the Teal movement has been describing the management theory that I have wanting to be doing it. People have been telling me that you need more structure and power and authority etc. and in a book called "Reinventing Organizations" the author is mapping out organizations that are employing this distributed leadership where the authority is all the way down with each and

every employee. That is how I have always wanted to do it and now there is a management theory backing it up and they are successful businesses.

For instance Zappos that is doing holacracy is another variant of participatory governance that say that: "We as a group are this organization, not this visionary leader that is dictating this visionary goal that we all are going to strive for and then we are going to align towards that goal".

It's rather an evolutionary process where we together have the self-leadership and initiative together develop and try to figure out where we are going. I find that very interesting to see organizations as groups of empowered people instead of clearly defined roles and specialized positions.

4.4.8 The Software Engineer

CD is a software developer from Portland, Oregon. He considers himself being an entrepreneur to some extent since his mid-teens when he put together construction projects with his friends, but in the word's true meaning since he got involved with Burning Man culture in 2006.

CD as entrepreneur

CD spends his working time mostly on programming for large-scale industrial businesses such as logistics companies, power plants etc. or doing custom development software for other companies. These include health care companies, betting companies etc. His largest own project that he also hopes to become a commercial product is called Volcor.

Volcor is an event management solution to put together different aspects of running a festival style event.

I have spoken with a lot of people – especially with technical people – who have really found it useful at their events. There are a number of different types of software for tracking people, shift management, surveys, mappings etc., but there has been no particular software to do all of these while at the same time being able to run across multiple events.

This then adds accountability when you can see the history of certain people for instance skip shifts that they had agreed to take or then reward certain people for them being active in multiple events.

Volcor is a commercial product and it is paid by subscription. It has now been mostly used at Burn events, but CD's intention is to start selling it to commercial festivals. Then, if it generates enough cash flow, he hopes that he could provide an open source or discounted version for Burn events.

CD as Burner

CD got involved with the Burning Man community in 2006 when he ended up sharing an apartment with some Burners in Utah. At that time he had not even heard of Burning Man.

He then got invited to Element11, a Utah regional and was immediately mesmerized by the culture and how people organize themselves to create all the art and the event itself.

It was an interesting experience when you are involved with a self-organized group where there is no one saying that "you have to do this", it's very self-driven and you look around you and see everybody who is self-motivated. To me, that is the also the driving force behind being an entrepreneur.

Seeing people organizing in this manner was fascinating to me. Of course you end up with leaders in that organization, but I would say that everyone who is

involved has an equal chance of becoming a leader in these organizations. There are no formal requirements of becoming one – if you want to do it, you will learn how to do it.

Ever since then CD has been involved in the Utah and Portland regional communities. He has gone to Burning Man a few times, but he is more interested in his regional community and has taken a leading role within his community.

Otherwise I have been involved with a few art projects such as effigies and pyrotechnics in the events. I also have been spinning fire and have been involved with fire performances for many times.

The biggest things that I have brought to my daily life after getting involved with the Burner community have been these community space parties that we have been organizing for years are a fun thing.

CD has gained and learned a lot from his community in terms of business as well as in terms of personal development. For example he has found a graphic designer whom he has hired every now and then in mutual projects.

Community involvement, skills sharing, “I know something and you know something. Because I have a similar set of values than you, why don’t we get together and see if each of us can learn something”.

CD says that the biggest personal development that he has noticed has been him being able to improve his communication and implementation skills.

Being a lead to all of these people who are from different walks of life and backgrounds. Having to then work with these people out in the desert – some of who have never even used any power tools before or how to pound a nail with a hammer – to build a safe structure for instance. Communicating with these

people has to be different because it's volunteer work and they can leave any time they want.

Logistical planning has also been something that I have learned. Having to deal with budgets, getting items from A to B, making sure that everyone has everything they need and just generally organizing and planning out timeframes to meet specific goals.

It is also delightful to see the people around you develop and gain courage to be who they want to be, CD explains.

I also have seen great change in people. Some people may have been quiet software developers and they have become flamboyant dancers and fire spinners because they met this community, started doing it, learned how, and discovered that this is what they want to do, and in general are much happier now than they were before.

CD explains that the biggest thing in being involved with the community is to learn how to take initiative and take ideas to reality.

One of the biggest things in the Burner ethos for me is that if there is something that you want and it does not exist, create it yourself and possibly ask some friends to join doing it. That is a huge thought shift in terms of the average person actually doing something about things they want to get changed.

CD concludes that the culture will surely change people who are involved with it and helps them to live happier lives.

How can the event not change you? You go to this event and you see all of these people do all these creative things and you realize that you can do them yourself. Probably what impacted me the most when I first went to Burning Man was to see all of these people doing all the things that make them happy - some

of which are not necessarily acceptable in the mainstream society. I saw some naked people who were rolling in dust, painted blue, and that was completely acceptable. That then raises the question that why don't I do things that make me happy?

4.4.9 The Logistics Entrepreneur

BM is a 44-year-old business owner from San Diego, CA. He runs a mailbox rental, and pack and ship store in the local suburbia. The first company BM founded was an LLC created to run their local San Diego community events. After doing this he understood that he could start his own business.

BM as Entrepreneur

Before establishing his own business, BM had been doing logistics and shipping management for his entire life so he knew the business well. He says that he has always been entrepreneurially minded, but never had the opportunity to do something. After having the experience of running the San Diego Burning Man community he finally had the confidence to achieve the goals he was after.

BM had been unemployed for a while and that started affecting his social life and ability to participate in the Burning Man community. He had to sort out the situation in order to come back to the community and continue to participate and hopefully inspire other community members. Luckily for BM, things fell into place then when he found a business partner who could finance establishing the business while him taking care of it.

Now we have our pack and ship store. It's like having our own theme camp in the neighborhood or at least it's kind of how I look at my little store. This little store in the corner in a little neighborhood where people come in and they have their little problems and we help them with their problems. We take all of their

problems as our own. We put a lot of emphasis in customer service as we think that is missing from a lot of services these days. Because of that, we have really good return-clientele as they like us, and for us that is huge.

BM as Burner

In the early 2000s, BM was going through some hard times in his life and being depressed. At that time BM's friend was dating a girl who was into Burning Man. His friend then one day said to BM: "Just come camping this weekend, OK?" BM was expecting a normal camping weekend and nothing else. The ticket was 60\$ that felt a bit steep, "but then again, it was four days of camping".

It turned out to be Burning Flipside 2003 near Austin, TX, and it was like 1100 people with all kinds of crazy art, flame effects, giant naked men wearing coconut bras and other typical Burning Man stuff.

Over the course of the events that weekend I kind of got it and came back the next year to volunteer to work on the parking. While doing that I met a girl from San Diego and we spent the weekend together and then I then ended up following her back up to San Diego from Austin. - Ever since then I have been going to Flipside in Austin, Burning Man and the San Diego regional.

Being involved with the Burner community has taught Brady a lot. By being involved with projects starting from building a motorized sofa, through starting a community space to establishing an LLC. He also says that it's been a good learning possibility to know how one deals with government.

Burning Man way is not the government way, but you just have to learn how to work with the government.

BM has learned many things over the years by being involved with the community.

I would say that the most definitive skill I have learned is Volunteer management. I have always been a pretty good leader since I was in the navy, but it's different there.

As far as business management stuff goes, you learn that it's really not that hard to start a business. You pay an 800\$ fee and you form an LLC, and if you make over 600\$ a year, you need to start filling out some more forms. You realize that you can do it.

BM says that being a Burner has definitely had an effect on himself and the way he runs his business.

It's funny when I come back from the events and back to my everyday life in my store and I see my customers, it's really hard to resist hugging them. I really want to reach out and embrace them. That's kind of how you feel like coming back from Burning Man.

It helps me to see my customers as just people. It's kind of that same vibe. Many of my employees tell me that they don't quite know what it is, but they really like working there because of the relationships with the customers and helping them out with their problems. - It's a little bit like a tech gap when they are coming with their phone and they want to print it and we can help them make it work.

Being part of the community has opened my mind to the idea that people are just people and everyone have their own needs. A lot of my customers come back because of the relationship we have. They realize that they could go somewhere else, but they come back to spend money on my store for the relationship.

He also believes strongly that if he had not found the community, his business would not exist and he himself would be completely miserable.

I think that without this community I don't think that I would had been able to start my business because before I met the Burning Man community I just felt utterly defeated and I just felt that there was nobody else that saw things the way I did.

I was in south Texas that is extremely conservative environment. It just wasn't working out for me at the time. When I found the Burning Man community things just started to click and my life kind of turned around. So year, it changed everything and I could not imagine what would my life be without.

BM concludes that the best part of the events and community is sharing experiences and being present, and that it has given him a full life.

The immediacy is a huge part what happens. It's about "being there", not watching it on YouTube, not hearing the story about it when you were out in the port a potty, it's about being there when it happens and you are part of it. If you are not, you just missed it. If you are there and get to share it with other people then it's like a friendship incubator.

The experiences can vary from you breaking down, or you having a triumph or you supporting somebody else while they are breaking down and you all go through it together in a weekend and after the weekend you guys feel like you guys had been knowing each others for years.

4.5 Findings

This part will discuss the findings from the case projects and the interviews. The data shows that it is good to make a distinction how Burning Man events and community activities separately as they can be seen a bit differently by their scope and their impact on people are a bit different and provide different types of learning experiences. These 'critical learning events' can be found in condensed form in Appendix 2. and 3.

4.5.1 Entrepreneurial learning in the context of Burning Man activities

When breaking down elements of entrepreneurial learning in this study, various events from the data will be compared with the theory to indicate the nature of the events that can be described as entrepreneurial learning events.

Opportunity recognition, taking action, problem solving and adaptation

Managing a project for Burning Man is a constantly iterative process that requires spotting opportunities and acting on them, tackling various problems that occur on the way, and adapting to changing external situations or when things don't work out as planned. Especially when dealing with something that aims to deliver something to the middle of the desert on the other side of the world with volunteer work force that have no prior experience. Lessons learned from these situations can be then translated into experiences that can be found helpful in the future events.

All of these elements were described in detail on the Aalto on Fire and Koulu on Fire projects and they occurred multiple times from their inception until their final delivery and closing. As some of the examples of these learning events can be mentioned 'Starting the project', Radio Silence, finding tickets and pivoting' 'Multiple problems during the build week in Reno' and 'A week of wonder and serendipity'. These events then provided a lot of experience for what to expect the next time.

The interviews show a variety of evidence where taking a role and acting in their communities. Participants have been able to translate the lessons learned from these experiences to their entrepreneurial endeavors. Examples of these can be mentioned in the interviews of: 'The Instrument Manufacturer', 'The Maker and 'The Thinker'.

Learning from past experience and reflection

Past experience and reflection played extremely important role in delivering 'Koulu on Fire' project. By having identified the critical issues, which almost brought the previous project down, the team was able to run much smoother. Examples of these included the acquisition of ticket, organizing the transport, build space and knowing to prepare for sudden events were a great help in making the project successful.

Past experience and reflection was also visible in the interviews. In the case of 'The Logistics entrepreneur', the fact that he had established an LLC to run their community events then provided the know-how to incorporate his own business. This was also the case with 'The Passionate Helper'. Through her experiences with the community, she understood that a more collaborative business model is much more suitable for her than a competitive one.

Dealing with ambiguity, emotional pressure and failure

The cases have many clear implications of situations that have included ambiguity and emotional pressure, and without being able to deal with them, the project(s) would had been impossible to succeed. In the case of Aalto on Fire project, after the project was launched without no guarantees of succeeding. Other events of ambiguity and emotional pressure were the Reno build weeks in both projects and when The Man broke down during Koulu on Fire.

One case of failure was mentioned in the case of 'The Passionate Helper' that turned out to be a near fatal experience. The entire community was able to reflect on that experience and it made them to take safety measures much more seriously than before.

The interviews, such as 'The Passionate Helper' provided insight, which helps to understand that by being an active community member, ambiguity can be decreased in various actions such as establishing a company or trying out bolder ideas, because there is a safety net provided by the community that will catch you.

Practicing social skills and engagement

Practicing social skills and engagement is in the core of all of these activities. All work is volunteer-based leaving no room for coercion. Only way to complete both of the projects was mostly due to managing a social group. Also reaching out to social networks solved many problems faced during the projects.

All of the interviews give a clear indication to voluntary community work where many develop their social and communication skills that have been useful in further community work as well as in running their businesses.

Self-efficacy

Implications to the development of self-efficacy are portrayed clearly in both, the cases and in the interviews.

The case projects had not been possible without the team members having prior experience in similar types of projects from which they could draw their confidence. It can also be noted that because of the success with Aalto on Fire, the team members had the self-confidence to take on even more ambitious project of Koulu on Fire.

The interviews also give a clear implication from the development of self-efficacy. Almost every person interviewed had gained more courage to pursue their own projects and ventures after being involved with projects for Burning Man. Two reasons support this claim. The confidence gained from running successful projects and endeavors and the supportive community of like-minded people who encourage trying even harder.

Summary of the findings

According to the interviews, the events can appear as sort of a positive shock for the participants, which can trigger many processes in their thinking and how they perceive the world and themselves as part of it. By being exposed to an environment that is often harsh and to a system that completely differs from the one that people experience every day, can give a lot of surface to reflect themselves and their lives on – and what then could be different. The interviews also indicate that this is then supported by the sensation of one realizing that “if this is possible by passionate volunteers creating all this, what am I then capable of doing and applying these lessons in my everyday life?”

This of course does not happen to everyone who goes to these events and the scope of this study is limited to those only who have been strongly impacted by the events. These people who then do become impacted by the experience, often seek into Burner communities to work on various project for the events or other types of community work that has been described in-depth and broadly through the project cases and interviews in this study.

Both project cases give a clear implication that the projects related to Burning Man culture can teach similar skills and enhance traits that are described in the theory of entrepreneurial learning. It can also be noted that the ability to work as a team is in the core of succeeding in such project. By understanding and managing such complex project with many moving parts and uncertainties

requires a number of skills and attributes that are regarded 'entrepreneurial', and by accumulating experience through such project will lead to development of these skills and attributes.

The interviews give a very similar result as the project cases, but in much broader context. By participating in activities in local communities or working on projects to be taken to the event(s), Burners find much meaning and content in their lives. It is also to be noted that having a supportive and open-minded community behind anyone encourages the members of the community to try out new and more ambitious things, but the community is there to support if they don't succeed.

Most defining factors here seem to be that by taking different roles and undertakings in a social community that has shared goals, develops social skills, management skills, self-confidence, technical skills etc. and influence these people to become more collaborative than competitive.

By participating in these activities, many develop or improve their skills and traits that are beneficial when starting or running a company. The data provides clear examples where one has established a company and/or gained significant influence on how to run his or her business.

5 Discussion

Entrepreneurial learning is based on Kolb's (1984) theory of *experiential learning* that is used in this research to support the theory of entrepreneurial learning and the intention of this study is not to discuss the nuances of these theories, but rather have them complement one another. Politis (2005) described entrepreneurial learning as lessons learned from past experiences that are directed to a new enterprise that traditionally has been studied through prior startup or work experience (Politis 2005; Reuber, Dyke & Fischer 1990). Pittaway et al., (2011; 2015) have studied this phenomenon in the context of entrepreneurship clubs within universities where all the activities are traditionally geared towards entrepreneurship.

The aim of this study was to provide a point of view to the field of entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurship education that the setting where such learning can happen, does not necessarily need to have anything to do with startups, academia or student clubs.

Burning Man was chosen as the context of the study due to the author's access to the culture supported by prior literature (Turner, 2009; Chen, 2011) that has shown how the event and culture have been said to improve innovativeness, and that some companies such as Google have their corporate culture deeply embedded in Burning Man. To better understand the phenomenon why Burning Man is said to foster entrepreneurship and how it does that, the following questions were asked.

- 1) Does active engaging in Burning Man events and culture influence the development of entrepreneurial behavior?
- 2) How could Burning Man be utilized in entrepreneurship education and what

are the key takeaways from the experience that are seen beneficial?

These questions were answered by gathering data from using two action research case studies and interviewing nine Burner entrepreneurs. From each case, the themes related to entrepreneurial learning were identified and categorized to see if the events and implications fit the theory. These implications to theory were then gathered to tables [appendix 1. & 2.] after which, it was possible to cross-reference the interpretations from both sources of data and find similarities.

5.1 Implications for theory

Entrepreneurs are action-oriented (Carswell, 2000) and they learn by doing (Cope and Watts, 2000; Smilor, 1997) and experimenting; they learn from their mistakes and failures, by solving problems and taking opportunities, they also learn through feedback and reflection – and what is really important – they learn from their peers (Gibb 1997). This is also what Burners do. They get together to share dreams and ideas; they organize large volunteer-driven events together where the main focus is in collaborative creation, self-expression and experimentation – often in very harsh environments where they have no other choice than to survive as a group. Some experience these events so overwhelming that their entire perception of the world is changed. This is very similar that the entrepreneurial and experiential learning literature points out; experiential learning includes accumulation of new knowledge and/or understanding that is linked to collective experiences (Baker, Jensen, and Kolb 2005 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015) and they engage as participants in practical work assignments (Burgoyne and Hodgson 1983; Davies and Easterby-Smith 1984 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). The data suggests that when some of the Burners then come back from these events where they have engaged with a variety other like-minded individuals or perhaps set up their own work of art or helped to organize the event, they often have their heads full of ideas that they want to create; an art piece, an experience or they have noticed something with the organization so they want to fix that for the next event.

Some of the creations then get so ambitious that they don't succeed and people even may get hurt in the process, like happened with one of the interviewees with their climbing installation. This is very similar what the experiential learning theory explains: *A typical feature in experiential learning is that the opportunities to learn from mistakes are created for the individuals thus providing a chance for personal growth through new experiences* (McLaughlin and Thorpe 1993; Mumford 1994 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). Researchers have reached a consensus that these experiences have to be social and include social learning where other participants are engaged in the process (Lervik, Fahy, and Easterby-Smith 2010; McLaughlin and Thorpe 1993 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015) and entrepreneurship educators encourage experiential learning (Gibb, 2002 cited in Pittaway et al. 2015). All this describes perfectly how Burner communities function.

Entrepreneurial learning is based on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, but according to Politis (2005) it differs in the sense that the experience is usually related to prior startup or work experience. Gibb (1997) clarifies that entrepreneurial learning happens when experiential learning happens and the action following is directed to new enterprise. This is the definition that indicates that entrepreneurial learning can happen at Burn events and communities. The data gives extensive implication from all of the interviews that participants have learned something while interacting with Burner communities and then transformed this knowledge either to start a business, improving their existing to function better, or they have started working on other projects that can be considered as entrepreneurial activity.

Based on these definitions, Burners learn through experiential learning, but when the lessons they have learned have sparked up a new business idea or how to run their business, the learning is considered entrepreneurial. This gives a strong implication for the theory that entrepreneurial learning can and does happen in Burn events and communities.

5.2 Implications for practice and entrepreneurship education

This study argues that Burning Man activities should be seen as a viable addition in higher-level entrepreneurship education to support entrepreneurial learning and multi-disciplinary teamwork to provide broader perspective than traditional project-based entrepreneurship education provides.

Pittaway and Cope (2007) identified a number of elements that simulate entrepreneurial activities and provide effective entrepreneurial learning experiences. These include: *uncertainty and ambiguity, stepping outside normal education processes, increasing emotional exposure by entirely unfamiliar activities or projects, project-based and hands on approaches, and applying established knowledge to new problems.*

The case projects in this study [appendix 2.] provide detailed information that projects created for the event include all of these elements mentioned.

This study argues that designing and delivering an art installation to the other side of the world in to the middle of the desert where no life exists, is something that is definitely not guaranteed to succeed or something that most people have ever done before – especially the ones studying entrepreneurship.

The data shows that engaging in such project requires a multitude of skills ranging from artistic creativity and art work, technical know-how and production methods, project and operations management, communication and social skills are required.

As the medium is art, the value of the outcome very difficult to quantify by using traditional metrics such as sales or cost savings per unit, but the success is rather defined by other, intangible metrics. This would provide a completely different type of perspective to complement the existing models.

This type of project work would also provide a form of cross-disciplinary collaboration with artists, technical students and business students, thus providing an opportunity for each to learn from one another.

It can of course be criticized that this type of education is difficult and expensive to organize as not that many universities have such variety of disciplines that are needed to run such project while the benefits are difficult to quantify. To respond to this possible criticism, a joint-project between different universities could be organized.

To argue the benefits that are difficult to quantify, the data of this study points out many of which few are mentioned here: first, succeeding in such project will raise the self-efficacy of the participants; second, such cross-disciplinary work increases understanding of the work of other and way to approach problems; being exposed to a harsh environment with completely different governing system gives a lot of surface to reflect every-day activities, and last, it has proven to indicate the participant his or her true potential due to exposure to the unusual, creative environment.

5.3 Evaluation and limitations to the study

The data collection and analysis followed qualitative research methodology. To evaluate the validity of qualitative research Eriksson & Kovalainen (2015, pp. 368) mention that three basic concepts of *reliability*, *validity* and *generalizability* provide a good framework to evaluate qualitative research.

Eriksson & Kovalainen (2015) mention that the reliability of the study refers to the correct method used to conduct the study and if another researcher is able to come up with similar findings by replicating the study. To obtain the deep understanding of the topic in this study, action research and thematic interviews were used in this study. Narratives of both, the action research and interviews

were written and then using thematic analysis, the themes were coded and similarities were found in both data sets.

To increase this study's validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest methods such as prolonged engagement and triangulation that refers to gathering qualitative data from multiple sources.

To provide thorough understanding of the context of the study, the author used prolonged engagement by spending sufficient time of two years with working on the cases and visited multiple Burn events and other gatherings, read mailing lists and contributed to the culture personally to understand what the culture is about.

As for triangulation, the researcher gathered two types of empirical data, as mentioned above, and multiple written sources to find indications of similar findings.

Generalizability refers to the research results can be extended into a wider context that in qualitative research implies to well-grounded and well-argued sources (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015 pp. 370).

In this study, the interviewees were all selected on the basis of them being entrepreneurs and having been exposed to the culture for a variety of time. No distinction was made between if they had been entrepreneurs before or after beginning to participate in the Burner culture.

As this study is meant to provide a point of view to observe the theory in a new context, it is understandable that universal generalizations cannot be drawn from this study to relate to other communities whose activities may share some similarities occur such as student clubs that are solely focused on art that the author argues is due to the homogeneity of the members.

Another point of criticism may be mentioned that this study only included highly motivated and active Burner entrepreneurs. No generalizations can be drawn from the total Burner population.

6 Conclusions and future research

The aim of this study was to provide a point of view to the field of entrepreneurial learning to point out that entrepreneurial learning could happen in a different realm than the traditional startup activities or entrepreneurship clubs that the prior theory suggest (Politis, 2005; Pittaway et al. 2015). According Burning Man communities appear to offer a good testing and development ground for such activities. The study also pointed out how these activities happening in these communities could be further used in entrepreneurship education and what kind of benefits it could provide compared to more traditional entrepreneurship education.

Burning Man events and communities provide a safe testing ground for a great variety of communal activities that allow the individuals themselves and the collectives to develop various skills of which, some lead to entrepreneurial development. They also provide a background on which to reflect perceptions of self and every-day activities, and often inspire the participants to go through a personal transformation for the better.

Burning Man has already provided a great context for researchers to study from personal to societal level. In terms of entrepreneurship research, the intentionality of the entrepreneurial learning would be an interesting topic, meaning whether the members of the communities intentionally join them to develop their skills or could the communities systematically train their members to learn certain skills. Second, further research could be conducted to test Burning Man's usability in higher degree education in various fields, in addition to this, it would be interesting to study how these experiences could then translate to improve the students' professional development. Third, research

could be made of other subcultures that share similar events as the Burner culture. As mentioned in the beginning, these include hacker communities and electronic music communities, to name a couple.

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8 Appendix

Appendix 1. Interview sheet

Semi structured interviews

1. Name, age
2. How long have you considered yourself an entrepreneur and in what field?
 - a. Can you tell me about your entrepreneurial life?
 - b. How did everything get started?
 - c. How is the everyday life at your business? Can you tell me about a normal week if there is such thing?
3. How many years have you been going to Burning Man and how has it impacted your life?
 - a. What year was the first time and what made you go there?
 - b. Can you tell me about the first experience?
 - c. Can you tell me about your projects and other involvement?
 - i. Have you lead your own project?
 - ii. How did it/they go?
 - iii. What did you learn from the experience?
 - d. How active are you within your community?
 - i. What kind of activities do you work on outside Burning Man?
 - ii. How much time do you spend on this?
 - iii. Has your local Burning Man community had an impact on your greater local community?
 1. How does it show?
4. How does being involved Burning Man show in your everyday life?
 - a. What are the most important things that you have brought back?
 - b. Has the experience changed your perception on things somehow?
5. Has the experience affected how you as an entrepreneur?
 - a. In what ways?
 - b. Would your business be the same if you had never participated Burning Man?
 - c. What do you think are key takeaways from the experience that can be applied in running a venture?